

PHILIPPINES

10th GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (GFMD)

Berlin, Germany

28-30 June 2017

Roundtable Session 3.2

Strengthening Cooperation: Enabling Civil Society Contributions in Migrant Integration

Mister Chairman,

Migration, particularly labor migration, represents one of the most complex policy challenges for government. As migration issues become prominent and diverse, a single institution alone cannot effectively manage migration. Government increasingly recognizes that managing migration requires the involvement of more than just government officials and international organizations.

Hence, collaboration between and among various migration stakeholders becomes significant. The government engages the civil society organizations (CSOs) in both the areas of policy development and implementation, as policy development processes happen in a multi-stakeholder field.

The challenge is how to harness the partnership to develop good policies and to attain sound implementation. The goal is the effective management of labor migration that involves the public and private sectors.

Recognizing the complexities of migratory flows and the linkages between migration and issues such as employment, security and development are increasingly becoming evident, it is also clear that individual government or institutions acting alone cannot effectively manage migration. Thus, multi-stakeholder collaboration in addressing migration is increasing, with productive partnerships developing at a variety of levels. At the same time, the crucial role that CSOs play individually and in collaboration with governments and other migration stakeholders in addressing the range of migration issues is becoming more recognized.

This recognition of the CSO's active role in managing migration provide an enabling environment for the smooth and balanced relation with the government, business sector and other members of the community in order to orderly manage the plight of the Filipino migrant workers.

CSOs not only provide services and support to migrants, but more importantly, they advocate for migrants' rights and welfare, and help in creating a multi-ethnic and multicultural society in the migrant's country of destination, thus enabling the Filipino migrants to assimilate, integrate and reposition themselves in their respective host countries.

The CSOs likewise serve as link between the migrant workers and the government. Despite the well-entrenched system of protection for its migrant workers, the country nevertheless has to incessantly respond to emerging vulnerabilities among OFWs particularly in areas such as violation of basic rights, discrimination at all stages of the migration process, fraud and deception at the recruitment stage, difficulty in adjusting to a foreign culture, contract violations, poor working conditions, and loneliness and anxiety over their families back home.

Cognizant of these multi-faceted migration issues and challenges, the CSOs play significant roles in complementing the efforts of the government in addressing such concerns and in providing efficient and effective migration services. They facilitate dialogue, mediation and good relation between migrants and host country nationals. CSOs are partners of government in providing other migration services like cultural orientation, tracing and family reunification, transit assistance and post-movement follow-up services, seminars and information dissemination campaigns specifically directed at increasing awareness of migrants' rights, counseling, medical assistance and return assistance for migrants in irregular situation.

The CSOs also act as the voice of migrant workers in major policy deliberations. They have been actively involved in bringing matters concerning distressed migrant workers to the attention of the government. They are given a seat or representation in the policy deliberations on migrants' concerns both at the international and national levels. Cognizant of the CSOs' specific experiences and capabilities, especially in networking and advocacy, CSOs are given an avenue to offer perspectives and ideas that can enhance migration policy debates.

Further, the CSOs are active partners of the government in the delivery of reintegration services. Given the magnitude and variety of issues confronting migrants, the support of CSOs is crucial in creating an enabling environment for a comprehensive reintegration program.

Mister Chairman,

As migration of people become more and more prominent, issues and concerns that couple this movement of people will not come easy to everyone at the overseas post frontline. It is recognized that much work will be required. Recent progress in terms of collaboration among all migration actors is encouraging, but the challenge remains huge.

Only active engagement by governments as well as social partners like the CSOs, business sector and civil society will assure the long term viability, credibility, and sustainability to national and international measures to protect and assure the rights and welfare of the migrant workers.

Thank you.