



24 March 2015

FIRST REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON MIGRANTS CAUGHT IN COUNTRIES IN CRISIS HELD IN MANILA

On 23-24 March, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), on behalf of the Philippine government, organised a regional consultation on 'Migrants in Countries in Crisis' (MICIC) for South, South-East and East Asian countries. The regional consultation which ended today provided an opportunity for governments of Asian countries to exchange views on the global initiative and on existing best practices for assisting migrants in crisis situations. As Ambassador Guy Ledoux of the EU Delegation to the Philippines explained in his opening remarks, 'we know that many countries, notably the Philippines but also others in Asia, already have good systems in place to protect their nationals abroad, and we want to learn from these experiences'.

The meeting was organised in collaboration with the United States State Department and the European Commission, with funding from the EU's Global Public Goods and Challenges programme. This is the first of the six MICIC-focused regional consultations envisioned with EU funding.

When conflict or disasters hit, international migrants present in the crisis-stricken country are often among the affected population. For a variety of factors, migrants can be especially vulnerable during crises. In some cases, migrants may be trapped, unable to leave the crisis area, in others they may be unwilling to leave or unable to access humanitarian assistance, while in others they may seek refuge across borders in adjacent countries. For example, the civil war in Libya in 2011 saw thousands of migrants from Asian countries in need of humanitarian aid and repatriation assistance.

In order to improve responses to the impact of acute crises on migrants, the US and the Philippines launched a global initiative in 2014 on Migrants in Countries in Crisis, in collaboration with the European Commission, Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica and Ethiopia. Aside from the CFO, the Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Foreign Affairs represent the Philippine government in the MICIC initiative.

23-24 March 2015 • Dusit Thani Hotel, Philippines



The initiative is working to develop a set of non-binding voluntary guidelines and best practices that will be used by governments, international organisations, civil society and private sector actors. According to Imelda Nicolas, Secretary of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, the mantra of the initiative is ‘to save lives, increase protection, decrease vulnerabilities and improve responses’.

The meeting was attended by over 100 persons, including government officials of 16 countries, as well as representatives of international organisations, civil society, and the private sector. It was organised with the support of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).