SOUTH ASIA CONSULTATION

PROMOTING SAFE MIGRATION TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION

Proposed Recommendations

I.   STRENGTHENING THE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK AND MECHANISMS

➢ Need for **harmonised anti-trafficking & migration framework in South Asia** that comply with international & regional human rights standards and agreements i.e. UNTOC, the Palermo Protocol, the ILO Forced Labour Conventions, GCM , Colombo Process etc.

➢ **Common definitions** and understanding concerning human trafficking and related terms such as regular and irregular migration.

➢ Review and amend existing laws and migration governance infrastructure to **guarantee that migrants and survivors have information and access** to the much needed legal and social protections and safeguards.

➢ Recognizing the value of regional alliances such as SAARC and cooperation with international institutions such as UNODC and IOM, have **closer cooperation with these bodies** for sharing intelligence on trafficking syndicates, facilitating cross-border investigations, victim rehabilitation and repatriation etc for facilitating a cohesive response to promote safe migration and counter human trafficking in the region.

II. ESTABLISHMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Effective migration governance requires **coordinated institutional mechanisms** that connect government agencies, law enforcement, social welfare departments etc:

➤ Strengthening and creation of **regional and national migration governance bodies** that facilitate collaboration, communication, policy coherence and joint-action plans.

➤ **Holistic and multi-sectoral approach** that includes the participation of the key government ministries such as the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Women and Child Welfare etc along with civil society organisations, was recognised as paramount to such efforts.

III. KNOWLEDGE AND DATA-BASED DECISION MAKING

➢ Recognizing the essential role that data collection (**qualitative and quantitative**) plays in developing effective migration policies and interventions, essential to have **live data management** to capture the **dynamic migration trends, trafficking routes, and socio-economic conditions faced by vulnerable mobile populations.**

➢ Establish **cooperative regional data-sharing platforms** to support more informed policymaking.

➢ Governments to **invest in research and technology-driven solutions**, such as biometric registration and digital case management systems, to improve the tracking and protection of migrants and trafficking survivors.

➢ Establishment of a **South Asian Human Trafficking Registry** to ensure that all trafficking-related data is recorded and shared among the relevant authorities. This would improve the region's capacity to monitor, prevent, and prosecute trafficking crimes through better intelligence sharing and survivor-centred interventions.
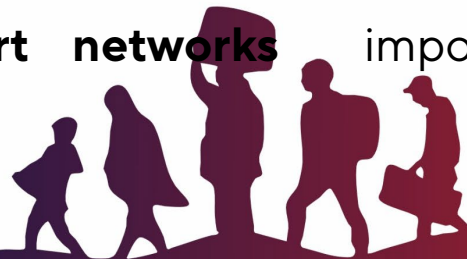
IV. CONVERGENCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

➢ Need for strong and long-lasting **partnerships among governments, civil society, and migration-related international organisations** to improve migration governance in the region.

➢ Cross-border cooperation requires **bilateral and multilateral agreements** that encourage safe migration pathways, safeguard the rights of migrant workers, and enhance **joint investigations** into organized crime networks / illegal recruitment agencies.

➢ Need for greater **engagement with private sector entities** to ensure fair labour practices and prevent exploitative employment conditions that lead to forced migration.

Governments requested to establish **formal mechanisms for collaboration with NGOs** to deliver vital services to migrants and survivors of trafficking.

➢ Rehabilitation & reintegration of trafficking survivors with the mainstream emerged as a key focus - strengthen short-term and long-term shelter infrastructure, **mental health** support services, and **economic support** programs for survivors.

➢ Survivors access to witness protection and **compensation schemes**.

➢ **Survivor-led advocacy and peer-support networks** important for long-term recovery and empowerment.

V. SENSITIZATION, TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF STAKEHOLDERS

Lack of awareness & knowledge amongst the **first responders** such as the border guarding forces, immigration & law enforcement officers etc highlighted the need for placing priority and resources in trainings to identify and prevent human trafficking, with a survivor centred approach.

VI. EMPLOYING TECHNOLOGY FOR MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

Technology has been identified as a vital factor in enhancing migration governance and service delivery:

➢ **Digital platforms** can help migrants access information about their rights, safe migration routes, and available services.

➢ Governments & CSOs can use **AI-based risk assessment models, digital identity verification systems, and real-time case management platforms** to monitor and analyse migration trends and trafficking activities.

➢ Enable migrants to report exploitation and access legal help through **mobile apps and multilingual hotlines**.

➢ **Digital remittance services** to promote financial inclusion and safety for migrant workers.

VII. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS AS PREVENTIVE TOOLS

Any effective response needs to recognise the linkages between human trafficking and migration and lack of preventive measures to ensure safe migration is identified as the primary cause of human trafficking.

➢ Preventive mechanisms require a **multi-diversified approach** that includes addressing the root causes and vulnerabilities.

➢ **Community-based surveillance systems** at the local level.

➢ Strengthening and expanding **pre-departure orientation programs** and offering safe migration guidance.

➢ Integration of migration and trafficking awareness programs into **school curricula**, and **community awareness programs** by civil society and governments, to educate the youth about the rights and risks linked to migration.

➢ To avoid being entrapped by traffickers, **capacity-building initiatives for at-risk migrants**– including language and vocational training for their successful integration in destination countries.

➢ Governments urged to **prioritise child rights and child protection -** provide equal educational opportunities for vulnerable at-risk migrant children and survivors and ensure their inclusion and access to essential services.