Her Excellency Chou Bun Eang, Vice Chair of NCCT and Secretary of State of the Ministry of Interior

Representatives of different Ministries and General Departments

Fellow Colleagues from the UN

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon.

Today marks a very important step for the Royal Government of Cambodia in advancing the process of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration ( GCM) as this will be the one of the many consultations we will working together to achieve the development of the GCM National Implementation Plan for Cambodia.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Royal Government of Cambodia through for being one of the 6 Champion Countries in the Asia and Pacific and one of the 50 GCM Champion countries in the world. This is indeed a big milestone for Cambodia to be a model to other countries in the implementation of the GCM and to H.E Chou Bun Eang as the appointed representative of Cambodia to lead the GCM process.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) provides an effective framework for international cooperation on the governance of international migration in all its dimensions.

The GCM the first intergovernmental agreement, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, to cover all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner and has been adopted by 193 member states including Cambodia. Resting on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the GCM presents a cooperative framework to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration while minimizing factors that compel irregular movement or cause or exacerbate vulnerability at different stages of migration. The 360-degree vision and ten cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles of the GCM provide precisely the approach necessary to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The GCM places the existing normative framework governing international migration within a cooperative framework for achieving effective migration governance.

With the current COVID-19 crisis, the GCM can guide us, in developing inclusive COVID-19 preparedness, prevention, response and recovery measures and beyond COVID-19 that protect human rights and enhance the positive development effects of human mobility.

The proportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people on the move presents itself as three interlocking crises, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities: a health crisis, a socio-economic crisis and a protection crisis. In Cambodia alone, more than 260,000 Cambodian migrants have returned back home as they have been affected by COVID-19 and many migrants as well have been stranded in other countries.

A well governed migration can mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19, stimulate strong socioeconomic recovery and build more inclusive societies that protect human rights and are better prepared to address future crises. Many governments around the world are implementing measures in response to COVID-19 which are aligned with the GCM, such as ensuring that access to health care and other essential services are available to all, irrespective of migration status; extending work and residency permits or regularizing status; releasing migrants from immigration detention and access to information, healthcare, social protection and other services; or temporarily suspending forced returns. In this pivotal moment, it is critical to build on these good practices and demonstrate renewed commitment to implementing the GCM.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The pandemic is bringing into focus the vital role that migrants play in our societies, and the need for more effective migration governance that both protects and empowers migrants as important members of our communities.

As mobility restrictions have been imposed, many migrants, particularly migrants in irregular situations and migrants with precarious livelihoods or those working in the informal economy, have been more likely to face exploitation.

Others have become stranded at borders or are at a heightened risk of human trafficking, arbitrary detention and forced return. COVID-19 is also deepening pre-existing inequalities, including for migrant women who face higher risks of exposure to gender-based violence, harassment abuse, exploitation and discrimination.

I do hope that in today’s consultation meeting, we will understand more clearly the priorities that the Royal Government of Cambodia and how these priorities can shape up in the GCM step process towards the drafting of the GCM National Implementation Plan and towards reporting its achievement to IMRF in May 2022. Second, we would like to hear your views on how we can work together work together with Cambodia to develop the national implementation plan. Finally, the key to a better impact is a whole -government and whole society approach.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the leadership of H. E Chou Bun Eang for her continued dedication and commitment thorough this process and to the rest of the ministries.

I wish you all with 4 Buddha blessings – longevity, nobility, health and strength.

Thank you.