

Tokyo Immigration Forum Script

09 December

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Fourth Tokyo Immigration Forum.

I want to thank the Immigration Services Agency of Japan, and the Ministry of Justice, for giving IOM the opportunity to join this Forum every year.

This forum is always vital, because it brings together leaders of immigration agencies throughout Asia and the Pacific ... the origin, transit and destination for millions of migrants, and home to one in three migrants around the world.

The major changes the world is experiencing – climate change, demographic shifts, urbanization – are among the most pronounced in the Asia-Pacific region.

Four of the ten of the countries with the biggest expected increase in population over the next 30 years are in this region. And so are four out of the top ten countries with the largest population declines.

These demographic changes have a profound effect on economies ... and on migration.

When working-age populations decline, that creates strain on governments and exacerbates labor shortages.

And at the same time, people in other countries lack opportunities, so they move ... even though they have limited ways to access regular migration pathways.

In this region, and many others, there is a high proportion of irregular migration.

But many irregular migrants find jobs in informal markets. That shows there's an imbalance between regular migration pathways and economic need, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, construction, hospitality, and healthcare.

So as you continue your discussions in this Forum, I urge you to look for innovative ways to tackle these challenges.

Working together, I believe we can encourage both the growth and development of origin countries, and the strengthening of safe and regular pathways to meet labor force and other economic needs in destination countries.

One of the best parts of the Tokyo Immigration Forum is that provides a unique platform for sharing data-driven insights and best practices.

It also encourages strategic collaborations and cooperation, the kind of approach that led, for example, to the recent launch of the Migration Information and Data Analysis System in Tonga.

Thanks to help from the Government of Japan, Tonga is now the 31st country in the world using the MIDAS system to process entries and exits at its borders.

This Forum is also where we can have important discussions about the protecting the rights of migrants who are moving for work, so we reduce the potential that they are abused and exploited by unscrupulous actors.

We're glad to support and also applaud

- Australia's new Workplace Justice Visa, part of a package of measures that tackle exploitation of migrant workers.
- ASEAN's Declaration on the Protection of Migrant Workers and Family Members in Crisis Situations, and its Declaration on the Placement and Protection of Migrant Fishers.
- And Japan's new vocational training and employment system for labour migration that includes complementary forms of protection.

So I urge you to continue discussing these important topics and learn from one another. That's what this Tokyo Immigration Forum is all about.



Thank you to the government of Japan for hosting, thank you to the people of Japan for your support ...

And thank you to all of you for attending, and for your work to make the world a better place.