[Draft] Briefing Paper:
Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD)

What is it?

The Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) is an initiative of the Colombo Process designed to establish dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination. It is the first initiative of its type, designed to strengthen the management of contractual labour mobility.

The first Ministerial Consultation meeting was held in 2008 hosted by the UAE and was themed: 'Contractual Labour Mobility in Asia: Key Partnerships for Development between Countries of Origin and Destination'. The meeting was designed to highlight the potential of contractual labour mobility to benefit overseas workers and the general development of both origin and destination countries.

Following this first meeting there have been various Senior Officials Meetings and two more Ministerial Consultations, one in 2012 and one in 2014.

Image Source:
http://abudhabidialogue.org.ae/ar/media-center/photo-gallery.aspx

What does it do?

The ADD is a forum to mobilise new ideas and concrete activities towards the development of a comprehensive and practical regional framework for contractual labour mobility in Asia, promoting the welfare and well-being of workers and the development of origin and destination countries, with the active support of international and regional partners.

The focus is on areas of common interest that would benefit from deeper practical collaboration between origin and destination countries. These areas include enhancing knowledge regarding labour market trends, skills and remittances, matching labour demand and supply, preventing illegal recruitment practices, promoting welfare and protection for contractual workers and developing a framework for a comprehensive approach to managing the entire cycle of temporary and contractual mobility that fosters the mutual interests of countries or origin and destination.

The current priority of the dialogue is to identify the role and responsibilities of both the government and the private sector at every stage of the contractual work cycle.

Member States

The ADD is a dialogue between the 11 Colombo Process countries/countries of origin (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam) and 9 countries of destination (Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, UAE and Yemen).

Civil Society Involvement?

Some civil society actors including academics, NGOs and private sector representatives attend thematic ADD meetings as observers.

Relative to the Colombo Process, from which the ADD is derived, the ADD is a more insular and closed initiative, lacking considerable avenues for CSO engagement.

Recent Activity

At an ADD Senior Officials meeting in May 2016, Senior Official representatives from ADD member governments reviewed the labour recruitment model and the need to tighten government oversight to ensure transparency and protect workers from exploitative practices, as well as the need for harmonisation of standards and skills of recruited workers, and the need for jobs to be filled.

Senior Officials recommended that the upcoming 4th Ministerial Consultation take up bilateral and multilateral cooperation to confront challenges of labour recruitment and consider alternative recruitment models. They also recommended bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of skill recognition, certification and development.

More Information:

- http://apmigration.ilo.org/resources/meeting-of-abu-dhabi-dialogue-senior-officials-11-12-may-2016-dubai-united-arab-emirates-uae-final-report

- https://www.iom.int/abu-dhabi-dialogue

- http://www.colomboprocess.org/Other_RCPs_Abu_Dhabi_Dialogue-5a-12.html

- http://abudhabidialogue.org.ae/en/home.aspx