

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is a great honor and pleasure to represent Sri Lanka at this 8th Ministerial Consultation.

I wish to express our sincere gratitude to the United Arab Emirates for their steadfast leadership in steering this vital Regional Consultative Process. In the current context of Sri Lanka, labor migration has evolved beyond a social phenomenon.

It has become a vital pillar of our macroeconomic stability and a key external sector variable. As we move toward sustainable and inclusive growth, our migrant workforce represents a cornerstone of national development strategies. Our National Policy on Migration views our workforce not merely as labor, but as high-caliber "Human Resources" endowed with specialized competencies. To support this, we have integrated vocational educational paths directly into our recent national education reforms. Furthermore, we are currently reforming our labor laws to harmonize them with global standards and practices.

Our goal is to ensure a decent working environment characterized by strong, collaborative, and democratic production relations across all sectors. Through our new Skills Recognition Systems, we aim to enhance productivity while ensuring a fair share of benefits and, dignity for people. We want every Sri Lankan migrant worker arriving in the MENA region to be recognized as a certified professional. We particularly focus on the economic resilience of the migration corridor. We are taking decisive measures to integrate digital financial literacy into all pre-departure orientations and training.

We advocate for technology-driven, transparent recruitment systems that eliminate the irregularities and predatory fees that have historically burdened migrant workers. Our vision is to ensure that the "last mile" of a worker's remittance reaches their family through secure, low-cost digital corridors, boosting the financial health of both sending and receiving nations. As we address the global impacts of climate change, I just recall the impact of Dithwa cyclone that hit Sri Lanka last November and how discriminately it affected the poor and vulnerable. In support of climate resilience, Sri Lanka is committed to developing "Green Skills." From sustainable construction to renewable energy maintenance, we are preparing our youth for the high-quality "Green Jobs" of tomorrow. I propose a regional partnership within the Abu Dhabi Dialogue to standardize these green certifications. This will allow for a seamless flow of skilled migrants who can contribute positively to the ambitious sustainability goals of the GCC states.

Excellencies, economics cannot be dealt with in isolation. It is deeply interconnected with society, the environment, and our shared humanity. We call for enhanced bilateral cooperation to improve access to social justice for everyone. We believe that a secure worker is a productive resource. By protecting the most vulnerable, we strengthen the integrity of the entire migration corridor. Sri Lanka remains a steadfast and committed

partner of the ADD. We must work together for the shared prosperity of labor-sending and labor-receiving nations through genuine collaboration.

Let us use this 8th Consultation to move toward actionable policies that reflect the steady transformations of 2026. Together, we will build a migration framework that is safe, just, orderly, and mutually beneficial for our economies and our people.

Thank you.