



Institute of National Security Studies

Book Launching and Discussion on South Asian Labour Migration: Issues and Concerns held at Hilton Hotel, Colombo

Press Release

Colombo, November 12, 2024 – The highly anticipated publication, *Labour Migrants from South Asia: Issues and Concerns*, was officially launched on November 12th at the Hilton Colombo. The book compiles insights and policy recommendations from a pivotal regional seminar on labour migration issues in South Asia earlier this year. Mr. Sumith Nakandala, Former Secretary of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), graced the event as Chief Guest. Furthermore, the guest of honour of the event was Ms Dammika K Wijesinghe, Chief Secretary of, the Western Provincial Council.

The launch event was jointly organized by the Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT), the Political Dialogue Asia Programme of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), and the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) under the Ministry of Defence, Sri Lanka. In particular, the event was arranged in Sri Lanka under the vision of Dr. Nishchal N. Pandey the Director, COSATT. In addition, contribution from members of the COSATT and KAS were significant to successfully conduct the event at Sri Lanka in Liaison INSS.

Moreover, distinguished guests of the event were represented by the various organizations, along with, senior officials from the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment, and attendees from diplomatic corps representing South Asian Countries, renowned academics, and civil society circles, representatives from Think Tanks were gathered to mark the occasion. The book is an outcome of proceedings from the conference held on April 23, 2024, by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), in collaboration with COSATT and KAS. At this seminar, Colonel Nalin Herath, Director of Media and Spokesperson for Sri Lanka's Ministry of Defence, and Overlooking Director General and Acting Director (Research) –INSS, provided Sri Lanka's

perspective on labour migration, highlighting both its economic potential and the social challenges it presents. The seminar brought together eminent speakers to discuss critical issues such as exploitation, inequality, and social displacement, stressing the need for cooperative action to protect migrant rights across the region.

The newly launched book offers in-depth analysis and policy guidance, reflecting the collective expertise of South Asian scholars and policymakers. This publication is intended to foster continued regional dialogue and cooperation to ensure safe, fair, and equitable labour migration practices. In particular, during the discussion six key points were highlighted deriving from the launched book to understand what labour migrants do, such as; their contribution to National and Global Economy, Filling Global Labour Gaps, Creating Employment Opportunities, Remittances, increasing GDP at the national level, and household incomes at the local level, New Skills and Technologies back to Countries, also Changing Consumer Patterns and Land Holdings in Origin Countries and Labour Shortages and Social Costs in Origin Countries.

More importantly as an outcome of the discussion related to the newly launched book, unique recommendations indicated in the book also were highlighted, such as; Protect Human Dignity, Prevent them from exploitation, Addressing Social Costs including Family Needs back home, requirement of Collective Regional Action in South Asia, need of Advocate Rights of Migrants, Skill Building in Origin Countries, Add a gender perspective and finally Documentation of Labour Migrants.