OBJECTIVE

This Regional Strategy provides a strategic framework for responding to the particular challenges and opportunities of migration in the Asia-Pacific Region. By identifying emerging issues and priorities for action, as well as synergies between activities, it aims to provide a vision to guide IOM, its Member States and other partners in programme development and implementation.

STRUCTURE

I. Objectives
II. Migration Context in the Asia and Pacific Region
III. IOM’s Capacity in the Region
IV. Building Synergies in Regional Migration Management
   • Key areas for intervention
   • Cross-cutting approaches
V. Ways forward

KEY AREAS FOR INTERVENTION

• Assessing migrants’ vulnerabilities and support for vulnerable migrants
• Reducing health risks linked to mobility for migrants and the community
• Maximizing the development potential of labour migration
• Developing integrated border control mechanisms
• Mitigating disaster risks and ensuring preparedness for emergency situations
• Promoting a comprehensive approach to migration, climate change and the environment.

CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES

• Strengthening strategic partnerships with key stakeholders
• Supporting policy development and capacity building on migration management
• Supporting safe and legal migration through the provision of facilitated migration services
• Fostering international cooperation and agreements at bilateral and regional levels
• Developing outreach activities for parliamentarians and civil society
• Promoting partnerships with the private sector
• Supporting further stakeholder coordination in migration management
• Promoting improvements in research, data collection and knowledge management
• Engaging in advocacy and communicating on migration
• Promoting sound programme monitoring and evaluation

Annex: IOM office locations in the region with contact details.
I. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Regional Strategy for Asia and the Pacific 2012-2015\(^1\) (Regional Strategy) on human migration is to provide a strategic framework for responding to the particular challenges and opportunities faced in the Asia-Pacific region and its sub-regions. By identifying emerging issues and priorities for action, as well as synergies between activities, the Regional Strategy aims to provide a larger vision to guide IOM, its Member States and its other partners in programme development and implementation.

This Regional Strategy is set within the framework of IOM’s global strategic objectives. IOM intends to act as a global resource for all key stakeholders involved in migration issues, through fulfilling its role as the leading migration agency.

In the coming years, IOM will focus on strengthening its capacity to support migrants and member states. The Organization will continue to advocate for an increased government and public recognition of the positive contribution of migrants and migration.

To achieve these goals, IOM will focus on the following activities, acting at the request of, or in agreement with, Member States:

1. To provide secure, reliable, flexible and cost-effective services for persons who require international migration assistance.

2. To enhance the humane and orderly management of migration and the effective respect for the human rights of migrants in accordance with international law.

3. To offer expert advice, research, technical cooperation and operational assistance to States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, in order to build national capacities and facilitate international, regional and bilateral cooperation on migration matters.

4. To contribute to the economic and social development of States through research, dialogue, design and implementation of migration-related programmes aimed at maximizing migration’s benefits.

5. To support States, migrants and communities in addressing the challenges of irregular migration, through research and analysis into root causes, sharing information and spreading best practices, as well as facilitating development-focused solutions.

6. To be a primary reference point for migration information, research, best practices, data collection, compatibility and sharing.

7. To promote, facilitate and support regional and global debate and dialogue on migration, including through the International Dialogue on Migration, so as to advance understanding of the opportunities and challenges it presents, the identification and development of effective policies for addressing those challenges and to identify comprehensive approaches and measures for advancing international cooperation.

8. To assist States to facilitate the integration of migrants in their new environment and to engage diasporas as development partners.

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\(^1\) The IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific covers the following 40 countries: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China including Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Federate States of Micronesia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kiribati, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Viet Nam.
9. To participate in coordinated humanitarian responses in the context of inter-agency arrangements in this field and to provide migration services in other emergency or post-crisis situations as appropriate and as relates to the needs of individuals, thereby contributing to their protection.

10. To undertake programmes which facilitate the voluntary return and reintegration of refugees, displaced persons, migrants and other individuals in need of international migration services, in cooperation with other relevant international organizations, and taking into account the needs and concerns of local communities.

11. To assist States in the development and delivery of programmes, studies and technical expertise on combating migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons, in particular women and children, in a manner consistent with international law.

12. To support the efforts of States in the area of labour migration, in particular short-term movements, and other types of circular migration.

The Regional Strategy contributes to the achievement of these goals.

II. THE MIGRATION CONTEXT IN THE ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION

A. Regional issues and trends

The Asia-Pacific Region hosts more than half of the world’s population (3.7 billion persons). The region generated 56 percent of world GDP in 2010, and is characterized by dynamic and diverse forms of migration. The number of international migrants in Asia in 2010 was estimated at 27.5 million, which represented just under 13 percent of the total global figure. This total includes 4.3 million international migrants from South and South-West Asia. The Asia-Pacific Region comprises not only major migrant countries of origin, but also traditional and emerging destination countries. Countries like India and China have become simultaneously countries of origin, transit and destination. Widening north-south economic disparity coupled with demographic challenges continues to promote intra-regional migration. It is estimated that 43 percent of Asian migrants move within the region.

Increasing labour migration activity improves the region’s labour markets and facilitates the flow of remittances, trade and investment between countries. This brings positive impacts on consumption and economic growth. In the Philippines, the region’s largest labour sending country, remittance inflows accounted for 12.2 percent of GDP in 2009, while they reached 22 percent in Nepal. Notably, despite the global economic slowdown, remittance flows to South and East Asia have remained relatively robust. In 2010 alone, four of the top ten remittance-receiving countries were in Asia, and two specifically in South Asia (Bangladesh and India). The flows of labour migration in Asia-Pacific are often from lower-income countries, such as India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam to countries/areas, which have labour shortages and offer higher wage opportunities, such as Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of China) and Singapore. Besides labour migration, the region experiences other voluntary flows for permanent migration, and study. Increasing mobility of students and retirees, as well as increasing international marriages (particularly involving North-east Asian men), are notable trends in the region.

A significant share of the migratory flows in the Asia-Pacific Region is irregular. The region hosts the largest undocumented flows of migrants in the world, mainly between neighbouring countries. Irregular migration routes are not only intra-regional but extend beyond the region. Some of these movements are supported by smugglers, who may or may not be connected to transnational organized crime.

Mixed migratory flows are characteristic of the region with some people on the move in search of better living conditions while others flee conflict and persecution. The increased security concerns associated with
the negative perception of migration among host populations has led many countries to take a stronger stand against irregular movements. With a growing number of migrants in administrative detention and returned to their country of origin, the costs of managing migration are increasing. This also poses new challenges from a human rights perspective. States are working together to develop bilateral solutions or finding new responses at the regional level for increasing the effectiveness of their response.

At the same time, the region continues to host the largest number of refugees and displaced people in the world, with Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran alone hosting 2.7 million Afghan refugees. Although the number of countries in the region which have ratified the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees remains low, programmes resettling refugees to the United States, Australia and European countries continue with a view to offering a durable solution to the persons concerned. These programmes, however, remain relatively small in scale in light of the size of refugee populations in the region.

A key feature of the region is the significance of statelessness and its nexus with migration. Aside from ethnic groups that have not been recognized as citizens in their countries of residence is the issue of second-generation migrants, not registered at birth by their parents, in an irregular situation, and at risk of statelessness. Moreover, stateless persons – in the absence of a national identity document – often have no access to international travel documents and therefore no option but to resort to irregular migration channels. Their status often limits their social and economic opportunities and makes them more vulnerable to being targeted by traffickers.

The region as a whole is highly susceptible to recurring natural hazards as well as environmental degradation and the detrimental impacts of climate change. Environmental and climate change-induced displacement and migration are becoming increasingly common phenomena in the region and are expected to continue to increase to challenging proportions. These factors all demonstrate the need for the development of multi-sectoral approaches to migration management.

B. By Sub-regions

(in bold: IOM Member States, in italics: IOM Observers)

South and South-West Asia

(Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of) Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka)

Every year, over 1.5 million workers migrate abroad from South Asia alone, mostly to the Gulf Region to perform low-skilled, temporary work. In the labour migration context, many countries in the sub-region are important countries of origin, while India and Pakistan are also classified as countries of destination and transit. Migration flows from South Asia to Europe are mostly composed of high-skilled migrants. Given the porous nature of the borders in the region, there is also a trend of irregular, undocumented movements.

As the long-term impacts of the global financial and economic crisis begin to be felt across South and South-West Asia, avenues for regular means of migration are likely to decrease, which may lead potential migrants to perceive irregular channels as an easier option despite the risks involved. With pressures on the local economy and labour market in destination countries, the global economic slowdown is leading to job cuts or restricted recruitment of foreign workers. In addition, the ‘Arab Spring’ challenged the power of incumbent leaders and resulted in turmoil in Libya, leading to the massive evacuation of migrant workers from that country to South and South-East Asia. This is prompting governments in South and South-West Asia to develop strategies for coping with the effects of changes in the labour market in destination countries due to economic or political crises, as well as exploring longer-term support for the rehabilitation of affected workers and finding new job opportunities abroad (by 2050, South Asia will have the largest workforce in the
world). Additionally, there are a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) migrating within their own country due to conflict, rural-urban disparities and/or environmental factors.

**East and South-East Asia**

(Cambodia, Brunei Darussalam, China including Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, Vietnam)

The search for a better life and economic opportunities within and outside the region continues to be the primary reason for migratory movements in the East and South-East Asian region. The potential emergence of a more integrated, interdependent regional market among countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is helping to drive the momentum towards the establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015. Throughout the East and South-East Asia sub-region, governments have been working to more effectively regulate the movement of professionals and migrant workers, while also ensuring better protection of low-skilled labourers. Cognizant of the growing cross-border, intra-regional and inter-regional mobility, governments and key actors alike are acknowledging the need to enhance migration management and increase bilateral and multilateral dialogue and cooperation.

Irregular migration and human trafficking remain challenges across the sub-region with the most common forms being irregular labour migration movements, trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation, sometimes through foreign marriages. Migration-related public health challenges continue to be a concern for governments particularly with re-emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, such as TB, HIV and malaria.

Natural disasters and conflict in certain areas also pose on-going threats to populations in the region and have resulted in the displacement of a huge number of people, leaving many in a highly vulnerable situation. Governments are increasingly supportive of disaster risk-reduction and disaster management initiatives throughout the region.

**Oceania**

(Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu)

This region hosts more than 6 million international migrants. It remains a sub-region of immigration with more people entering than leaving. The positive migration balance is largely due to Australia and New Zealand which remain attractive destination economies. Temporary work schemes for Pacific Islanders in both countries increase the number of temporary migrant workers, particularly in New Zealand which remains the leading destination for migrants from the Pacific Islands. However, the migrant population is increasing across the sub-region with Micronesia having the highest number of migrants as a percentage of its population. The bulk of the 1.5 million emigrants from the region originate from the Pacific Islands (37 percent) and it is mostly intra-regional. Emigration outside Oceania is mainly directed towards the United States and the United Kingdom. Irregular migration to the two principal destination countries (Australia and New Zealand) is mainly due to over-stayers who entered countries as tourists, while concerns relating to boat arrivals continue to be high on the political agenda in Australia.
III. IOM’S CAPACITY IN THE REGION

The Regional Office

The IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific is located in Bangkok, Thailand. The Regional Office provides technical and policy advice and programme support to IOM country offices as well as to external stakeholders in the region. The Regional Office hosts Thematic Specialists in the areas of labour migration and human development, immigration and border management, assistance to migrants and assisted voluntary return, and emergency and post conflict. A Policy and Liaison Officer provides guidance on the main areas of migration policy. Support to resource management and project development is provided by respective professionals, while a Media and Communications Officer facilitates relations with media and the public. Given the size and diversity of the region, IOM has appointed two Regional Coordinators, one for South Asia and the other for the Pacific, to monitor migratory issues in these sub-regions.

Country offices

IOM recognizes the value of working at the country level and implements national and regional migration projects and programmes through its 27 field offices across the region. IOM offices bring the Organization’s support closer to the beneficiaries and facilitate dialogue between it and its partners at the national and local levels.

Headquarters

In order to facilitate IOM’s regional response, in addition to the Regional Director’s close interaction with IOM Headquarters, a Regional Adviser for Asia works in the Director General’s Office in Geneva and ensures that Asia-Pacific priorities are represented at the highest level in internal discussions.

Operational Budget

IOM’s Programme and Budget identifies that the Asia-Pacific Region has been allocated the highest global level of voluntary contributions of US$201 186 300 for 2012, compared with all other IOM regions. The overall operational budget breakdown for the Asia-Pacific Region for 2012 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget area</th>
<th>Asia and the Pacific</th>
<th>Global allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Movement, Management</td>
<td>124 932 600</td>
<td>323 094 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency and Post-crisis Migration</td>
<td>28 061 300</td>
<td>61 650 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration Health</td>
<td>25 300</td>
<td>29 726 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration and Development</td>
<td>29 822 500</td>
<td>141 968 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating Migration</td>
<td>18 344 600</td>
<td>42 709 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating Migration</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4 662 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration Policy and Research</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>766 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repatriation Programmes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10 799 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Programme Support</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>201 186 300</td>
<td>615 377 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further information is available on the Programme and Budget for 2012 at: http://www.iom.int/jahia/webday/shared/shared/mainsite/about_iom/en/council/100/MC_2317.pdf

2 The list and contact details of IOM offices in the Asia-Pacific region is provided in the attached Annex.
IV. BUILDING SYNERGIES IN REGIONAL MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

IOM has identified six key areas for intervention across the region and promotes cross-cutting approaches across these areas.

The six key priority areas for intervention reflect an analysis of the current state of migration globally, and in the Asia-Pacific Region and its sub-regions. These priorities are the outcome of a Regional Policy Formulation & Coordination Committee Meeting which took place in Hua Hin, Thailand in February 2012 involving the Regional Office, the Chiefs of Mission from the region and IOM Headquarters representatives.

The 6 key areas for intervention are:

1. Assessing migrants’ vulnerabilities and support for vulnerable migrants
2. Reducing mobility-linked health risks for migrants and the wider community
3. Maximizing the development potential of labour migration
4. Developing integrated border control mechanisms
5. Disaster risk reduction and preparedness
6. Promoting a comprehensive approach to migration, climate change and the environment.

A. Cross-cutting approaches

Strengthening strategic partnerships with key stakeholders

A primary objective in IOM’s strategy is to consolidate partnerships in the Asia-Pacific Region. IOM plays a key role in supporting partnerships and promoting informal dialogue between States as well as cooperation among agencies, civil society and migrants. In helping to develop and strengthen partnerships on migration, IOM provides substantive, expert and organizational assistance to governments and other institutions.

Key stakeholders include:

National governments – as an intergovernmental organization, IOM works closely with governments in promoting migration management that ensures humane and orderly migration that is beneficial to migrants and societies.

United Nations - IOM has a long standing and extensive working relationship with the United Nations (UN) at several levels. In practical terms, the increasing operational collaboration that has evolved over the past decade and a half between IOM and a broad range of UN entities has also resulted in more frequent inclusion of IOM in relevant UN working groups in the region. IOM has a close working relationship with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and at a national level inclusion in UN country teams.

Regional organizations and institutions - IOM works closely with regional organizations and institutions such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and
the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) to promote development of regional responses relating to migration management.

Non-government organizations (NGOs) and Civil society - Cooperation between IOM and NGOs as well as IOM and civil society actors occurs in various contexts in the region. These stakeholders may be collaborators with IOM, service providers or project implementers, donors, beneficiaries of IOM technical cooperation, grant recipients, or service recipients. IOM and NGOs or civil society actors may act as equal partners, or complement each other’s activities.

Research community - IOM maintains close working relations with regional research and academic institutions. Formal collaboration agreements with research institutions include the Korean Labour Institute (on comparative research on labour migration management in selected countries), and the Asia-Pacific Migration Research Network (on exchange of migration data and research). IOM also has working partnerships with numerous regional research institutions such as the Migration Policy Institute; University of Dhaka in Bangladesh; the Chinese Academy for Social Sciences; and the University of Adelaide and Macquarie University in Australia.

Migrant associations – Working closely with migrants and migrant associations as IOM’s key stakeholders is fundamental to successfully addressing complex migration challenges and opportunities for both migrants and other stakeholders involved.

Private sector - IOM has forged effective partnerships with private sector actors focused on areas of mutual interest and shared values with full respect for each other’s resources, expertise, knowledge and skills. Successful partnerships involve information exchanges on best practices, in-kind support and direct financial support of projects. Agreed goals and processes for monitoring, evaluating and publicizing partnerships are important elements of such partnerships.

Donor community - IOM works closely with the donor community to address today's many and complex migration challenges. To carry out these activities, IOM’s main financial resources come directly from governments. In addition to Member donor governments and the European Union, IOM also receives funding from UN agencies, the private sector and foundations. Over the years, IOM has extended its donor base and developed a variety of approaches with partners to secure funding to implement activities. IOM aims to strengthen and diversify its collaboration with donors and partners on its programmes and new strategic initiatives, matching donor priorities with ongoing and prospective programmes. This is achieved through a range of complementary approaches, including bilateral donor consultations.

Support for policy development and capacity building on migration management

IOM provides support and advice to key stakeholders regarding migration policy development and capacity building on migration management. Each country mission promotes strategic partnerships and delivers programmes with national governments and regional institutions, NGOs, civil society and donors to achieve this goal. The Regional Office aims to strengthen its support by serving as a hub for the monitoring and dissemination of new migration policy responses within the region. It is developing a format for the gathering of information and analysis on new developments in migration policy and legislation as well as migration management practices. This will also include the development of policy briefs on a wide range of migratory issues while paying particular attention to gender and human rights issues. In addition, Regional Thematic Specialists and the Regional Policy and Liaison Officer will continue to provide assistance to governments in the design, review and assessment of new migration policy and support reform of migration management systems.
Supporting safe and legal migration through the provision of facilitated migration services (self payer and other programmes)

Migrants in the region heavily depend on a variety of migration-related services, including pre-migration health checks or visa application services. Those services have to be accessible, reliable, provided at a reasonable and transparent cost, and in a way that ensures full integrity and respect for the rights of the migrants concerned. Providing or making available such services is one of the key roles of the Organization as laid out in IOM’s Constitution as well as in its global 12 point Strategy. Therefore, enhancing and expanding IOM facilitated migration services in the region wherever appropriate and possible constitutes another priority.

Foster international cooperation and agreements at the bilateral and regional level

IOM aims to promote States’ understanding of the range of options available when negotiating migration agreements or engaging in bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks. IOM offers to act as a broker between the parties by assisting to identify shared interests, possible trade-offs and leverage based on current international practices and in accordance with international standards.

IOM works closely with governments to enhance international cooperation in the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM), Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs) and the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

In the region, IOM will continue to actively strengthen migration management policy and practice through participation in Regional Consultative Processes such as the Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour (Colombo Process); Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia (Abu-Dhabi Dialogue); Asia-EU Dialogue; and the Bali Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process).

Currently, IOM assists the implementation of ASEAN initiatives on migration and has a presence in 8 of the 10 ASEAN Member States. In the SAARC Region, IOM has extensive programmes in 7 of the 8 member states. Within the framework of SAARC, one of IOM’s major goals is to strengthen regional cooperation to effectively counter trafficking in persons within the region. IOM cooperation with development banks at the regional level including the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank will continue to strengthen as common areas of interest are found. At present, that cooperation includes working together to address migration and development-related challenges, such as labour migration, migrant health care and mobility, border management and environmental degradation and climate change.

IOM also works closely with the United Nations (ESCAP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other regional UN offices, and regional research bodies to develop policy oriented research and increase the knowledge base required for strengthening and initiating regional policy responses.

Develop outreach activities for parliamentarians and civil society

IOM’s objective in the Asia-Pacific is to help legislators and civil society representatives better understand the challenges and opportunities of migration, regional migration trends as well as the changes in national and international migration law and policy. IOM will engage with parliamentarians and civil society representatives across the region to explore ways to increase parliamentary and public awareness of the international and regional migration agenda and encourage these significant stakeholders to consider their respective roles at the national level as well as in bilateral and regional processes.
Promote partnerships with the private sector

The private sector has an important role to play in the migration field, either as an employer of migrant workers, an international corporation abiding by corporate social responsibility principles or more generally as part of the contribution of the private sector to humanitarian and charitable projects. The Regional Office advocates for further involvement of regionally based companies as part of the UN Global Compact. This is an initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, including in combating labour exploitation. Further, IOM will facilitate private sector charitable contribution to projects such as those aimed at providing assistance to vulnerable migrants (i.e. victims of trafficking, stranded migrants), maximizing the contribution of remittances to development, or preventing labour exploitation through the organization of special events and fairs.

Supporting further stakeholder coordination in migration management

Migration is a fragmented policy portfolio in the hands of various ministries and institutional agencies. This is true not only for state actors but also for civil society (NGOs) and donor agencies, with each institution often looking at the migratory phenomenon from a particular angle. It is essential for key actors to be able to have an overall understanding of the migration situation and of the migration management agenda to ensure, at minimum, that there are no contradictions in efforts pursued, and wherever possible to facilitate the development of synergies between programmes and activities. IOM in the Asia-Pacific brings various actors together and assists in developing coordination mechanisms and in identifying possible synergies at the policy and programmatic level.

Promoting improvements in research, data collection and knowledge management

IOM aims to extend and expand its collaboration with experts and researchers on migration. There is a growing need for pragmatic and evidence-based analysis and research to guide and inform migration policy and practice. To respond to this demand, IOM will continue to promote best practice approaches to research, data collection and knowledge management. In addition, IOM notes the need to better integrate research components into the entire project cycle, improve quality of research products, focus on demonstrating results, and expand information dissemination efforts throughout the region. Strong progress already made in this area can be further built upon.

Advocacy and communications

Using targeted traditional and new media IOM will contribute to the public debate on migration by highlighting the rights of migrants (especially in the field of health) and the obligations of host and sending communities. IOM will show how human trafficking and people smuggling is ruining lives, and argue for better management of migration to avoid people becoming victims of criminals. The Regional Office will ensure excellence in public communications through on-going coaching, mentoring and direct training to Chiefs of Mission, Regional Technical Specialists and designated spokespersons. It will highlight IOM’s role in emergencies and support, where possible, resource mobilisation activities in both emergency and development spheres. Finally it will ensure IOM’s voice in the burgeoning field of ‘Communication with Disaster-Affected Communities’, in a regional, and occasionally global role.
Promoting sound programme/project monitoring and evaluation

Given a substantial proportion of IOM’s total income is generated from donor-funded project activity, its project monitoring and evaluation procedures and tools must continuously improve, be responsive to any changes in donor requirements, and be robust enough to withstand rigorous review and scrutiny.

IOM will strengthen its regional focus on using evaluation results to contribute to knowledge, institutional learning and improvements in institutional performance.

B. Key areas for intervention

1. ASSESSING MIGRANTS’ VULNERABILITIES AND SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE MIGRANTS

Regional situation and challenges

Vulnerable migrants are migrants who are in a situation of distress or particularly at risk of being abused or exploited, and whose human rights are threatened. They can be, among others, migrants stranded in transit or destination countries, unaccompanied minors, asylum seekers and refugees, stateless persons, victims of human trafficking, individuals with emergency medical needs, the elderly, single parents with children with no support mechanisms in countries of origin, and migrants who may have developed vulnerabilities or special protection needs as a result of suffering violence during the migration process.

In the region, vulnerable migrants are often found within mixed flows of migrants. These flows may involve irregular movements of populations along certain routes which comprise both voluntary and forced migrants (e.g. economic migrants, and asylum seekers). The hazardous journey, the abuses of smugglers, the lack of food and medical treatment, transform the situation for many of these migrants into one of extreme danger and despair.

Many of the policy and administrative structures of states in the region are not sufficiently resourced to respond to the situation of vulnerable migrants and provide assistance to these groups. This is partly due to a fragmentation of the portfolio, with policy and programmes focusing on certain narrowly-defined categories of vulnerable migrants such as victims of trafficking, asylum seekers and refugees. This leaves many vulnerable migrants unsupported if they do not fall within these groups. States are sometimes reluctant to provide assistance to vulnerable irregular migrants, on the basis that this fuels further irregular migration and drains limited human and financial resources. While there is no evidence of such a correlation, moving from an approach targeting “special categories of migrants” towards an overarching approach looking at “migrants in terms of vulnerability” will lead to a more efficient utilization of resources.

Regional priorities and strategies

This Strategy aims to address these challenges and capitalise on past endeavours of IOM in the region targeting certain categories of vulnerable migrants. IOM has implemented reintegration and assistance programmes for victims of trafficking, support to return of stranded migrants, support to resettlement programmes for refugees and capacity building activities to enhance policy and develop bilateral agreements and standards for assistance and return of irregular migrants. Emphasis will be on building synergy with

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3 While IOM is using the term ‘vulnerable migrant’ to cover a number of categories of persons at risk and subject to voluntary and forced migration processes, IOM recognizes the separate legal status afforded to some categories of vulnerable people such as refugees. Precise legal definitions and other migration related terms are available on IOM’s website at: [http://www.iom.int/jahia/jahia/about-migration/key-migration-terms/lang/en#refugee](http://www.iom.int/jahia/jahia/about-migration/key-migration-terms/lang/en#refugee).
other IOM programmatic areas relating to migrant health, labour migration and information campaigns on safe migration as well as border management.

**Support the development of policy on vulnerable migrants as well as setting up coordination mechanisms.**

IOM will assist states to develop policy looking at migrants in terms of vulnerability and need for assistance. This approach, while acknowledging the specificity of various groups (e.g. stranded migrants, victims of trafficking, asylum seekers, stateless persons) will focus on the commonalities of their basic needs (e.g. health, return or alternative solution, information). This change will require a new way to approach cooperation and coordination with the involvement of different agencies dealing with specific group of migrants or cross-cutting issues (e.g. health, combating smuggling); IOM will support the region and its sub-regions to develop and implement sustainable, institutional strategies that protect vulnerable migrants. This may also lead to realization of greater efficiencies in service delivery and support addressing the basic needs of vulnerable migrants in an increasingly tight fiscal environment.

**Moving beyond direct assistance to Victims of Trafficking towards assistance to vulnerable migrants.**

IOM will engage with governments and partners to expand programmes of direct assistance to victims of trafficking to other categories of vulnerable migrants. Assistance will be provided to identify the most vulnerable categories of migrants that would be in particular need of protection and assistance in order to develop evidence-based and effective programming and policy development. IOM will support the development and implementation of Memorandum of Understanding and Standard Operating Procedures at the national and bilateral level (between the countries of origin, transit and destination) to facilitate the return and reintegration of vulnerable migrants.

**Support capacity building of state and non-state actors**

Many governments in the Asia-Pacific Region require assistance in accurately identifying, processing, and protecting vulnerable migrants. First, governments must be able to identify categories of migrants that may be in a vulnerable situation and the type of assistance they would need. Secondly, there is a need to assess the role of public authorities or other stakeholders such as NGOs in the assistance of vulnerable migrants taking into consideration outreach and conflict that may arise from competition over limited resources. Finally, although migration management issues have an important place on government agendas, national resources remain limited. IOM will assist government to assess their human resources and financial needs for managing migration, and provide advice on how to direct resources towards activities with the most beneficial impact. In addition, where applicable, IOM will mainstream training and programmes on assistance to vulnerable migrants to on-going capacity building initiatives in counter-trafficking and other areas of migration management. Finally, there is a need for improved monitoring and evaluation of assistance programmes to ensure activities are effective and to sustain and stimulate donor interest.

**Promote cooperation through formal and informal frameworks.**

Cooperation between member states will be encouraged through the existing framework and initiatives at the regional level focusing on the issue of trafficked victims, stranded migrants, etc. such as the ASEAN Framework on Trafficking, SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking of Women and Children for Prostitution, the COMMIT Process and inter-regional processes such as the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Human Trafficking and Related Transnational Crime. Other fora and frameworks on migration issues (Colombo Process, Abu Dhabi Dialogue, Asia-EU Dialogue) will be also targeted for the creation of synergies between activities aiming to protect migrants from abuse and exploitation.
Delivering IOM resettlement programmes for refugees

Resettlement of refugees is one key pillar of IOM’s and it will continue to implement large-scale resettlement operations in the region, particularly for refugees. IOM’s resettlement assistance includes the following activities:

- Processing legal documents and requirements to facilitate the safe departure of refugees accepted for resettlement
- Medical assessments and counselling to ensure that refugees are fit to travel and meet the requirements of the destination country, then arrangement of medical or non-medical escorts as necessary.
- Language and skills training to equip refugees with basic communication and vocational skills to be able to adjust and become self-sustaining
- Pre-departure orientation to give refugees realistic expectations of resettlement through briefing them about life, basic adaptation, and culture in the destination country
- Pre-departure briefing on travel by air, including information on in-flight safety, departure and arrival protocol, packing, and travelling with children, since most refugees are first time plane travellers
- Movement assistance in coordination with authorities, non-governmental organizations and others, as well as transportation of the refugees from their current location to their future host community, normally through air travel.

Having facilitated the successful relocation of an estimated 100,000 refugees out of Thai camps and more than 20,000 out of Malaysia since 2004 and 2005 respectively, IOM continues to be actively engaged in the resettlement to a number of countries including the US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Japan as well as various EU countries. IOM will also continue to facilitate the resettlement of refugees from Nepal. IOM has assisted over 70,000 refugees to leave camps in Eastern Nepal and resettle in eight third countries, since the beginning of 2008.

Support for reintegration and return of vulnerable migrants

For vulnerable migrants who need to return home but lack the means to do so, IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes are often the only solution to their immediate plight. IOM will continue to promote partnerships and consultation between a diverse range of national and international stakeholders in the region as these are essential to the effective implementation of AVRR projects – from the pre-return to the reintegration stages.

The provision of reintegration assistance to migrants in their countries of origin is an important element to ensure sustainability of returns. IOM and partners in countries of origin in the region will continue to provide migrants with socio-economic support to promote their self-sufficiency as well as engage in development programmes with their local communities as a tool to prevent unsafe migration.
2. REDUCING HEALTH RISKS LINKED TO MOBILITY FOR MIGRANTS AND THE COMMUNITY

Regional situation and challenges

In Asia and the Pacific, the study and monitoring of migrant health needs needs to be expanded, given the dynamics of contemporary migration, the great diversity of vulnerabilities among migrant groups, and the lack of standardized approaches to collection, analysis and reporting of empirical data for programming and policy development on migration health. While data collection and reporting systems are already in place among the involved sectors, further movement towards standardized processes would be beneficial. As the public health sector has the primary mandate over health, it is important to strengthen its capacity to integrate migration health as a public responsibility, and to design and implement tools that would support implementation. A standardized migrant health information system that produces data with that of other countries is a tool that can be used in this endeavour.

Policy approaches have not kept pace with the growing challenges associated with the volume, speed, diversity and disparity of modern migration flows. In particular, current approaches do not sufficiently address the existing health inequalities, gaps in social protection and determining factors of migrant health services, goods and facilities. In Asia, migrant sending countries are challenged to ensure social and health protection for their migrants which may increase resource burdens on national health sectors, while addressing emerging public health challenges. In countries of destination, equal access to healthcare for migrants regardless of their immigration status is highly dependent on the economy and security, as well as popular opinion and perceptions. While progress has been made in raising awareness, building partnerships and generating consensus on policy frameworks concerning the health of migrants among relevant sectors and States, translating these frameworks into policies and legislative approaches is where the real challenge begins. Moreover, compliance and harmonization of these policies among countries is required to support ensure uninterrupted access to healthcare throughout the migration process.

In the region, the capacity of health systems to deliver affordable, accessible and migrant-sensitive services is challenged by the diversity of needs, vulnerabilities and health determinants of an evolving multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. Public health services do not sufficiently address the needs of marginalised populations such as persons internally displaced persons by disasters, irregular migrants in detention facilities, victims of trafficking and undocumented migrant workers. This has implications for public health. Despite the fact that migrants are becoming permanent members of societies, public health systems have not yet integrated services and costs related to the care of migrants in their permanent budgets and programme frameworks. Migrants can play an important role in the planning and delivery of services to their communities, and their involvement may overcome problems relating to language barriers and outreach.

Finally, the “health of migrants” agenda has not received adequate attention and support in national and regional governmental frameworks on health, nor in the relevant networks and platforms of migration and development. Regional consultative processes such as the Bali Process, the Colombo Process, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and the Asia-EU Dialogue offer avenues that stakeholders could use to advance the migration health agenda. Partnerships, advocacy and engagement with regional economic communities, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), and regional and global health networks like the Joint United Nations Initiative on HIV/AIDS (JUNIMA), the Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance (MBDS), WHO STOP TB Partnership, WHO Mekong Malaria Programme, etc., need to be strengthened to support programme and policy development related to the health of migrants. Thematic working groups, joint teams and task forces
on health and other areas of migration management both at the country and regional levels are to be engaged more consistently in this agenda not only to promote ownership and participation, but most importantly, to provide guidance and support to policy and programme development that addresses the health needs of migrants.

Regional priorities and strategies

The Migration Health Division’s Health Strategy for Asia and the Pacific aims to improve the standards of physical, mental and social well-being of migrants and communities affected by migration by responding to their health needs throughout all phases of the migration process, as well as the public health needs of host and sending communities in Asia and the Pacific.

In order to achieve this overall objective, the Regional Office through its Migration Health Unit and Country Missions will assist and work with partners and Governments to implement the following five strategies. The strategies are distinct yet inter-related and mutually supportive.

Strengthen knowledge and increase the pool of evidence relating to health vulnerabilities and challenges faced by migrants and migration-affected communities to support evidence-based, effective programming and policy development.

Priorities will include increasing the understanding of migration and health, including health worker migration, through research; promoting migration and health as a research agenda; and raising the profile of migration and health through information dissemination.

Advocate for migrant-inclusive health policies and programmes at national, regional and sectoral levels and assist in the development of policies to promote and protect the health of migrants.

This will be addressed through advocacy for regional, national and sectoral policies that address migration and health concerns. In addition, IOM will facilitate and strengthen national coordination on migration and health; and support the region to develop and implement human resources for health strategies conducive to development.

Facilitate, provide and promote equitable access to migrant-friendly and comprehensive health care services, information and referrals in order to improve health outcomes of migrants, migration-affected communities and crisis-affected populations.

Facilitating, providing and promoting access to relevant health services for migrants and communities affected by migration is essential. This requires increasing technical capacity of stakeholders to provide health services that are sensitive to the needs of migrants and communities affected by migration. Efforts will be made to strengthen and upscale the public health and primary health care components of health assessment and travel assistance services to migrants and refugees at the request of host and destination Governments.

Given that the region is highly disaster-prone, IOM will provide assistance to Governments and others to enhance emergency preparedness, response and recovery, in order to better manage health issues related to population mobility due to natural and man-made disasters.

Develop and strengthen regional institutional infrastructure, multi-sectoral partnerships and coordination among Governments, stakeholders and migrants in order to support implementation of programmes and policies addressing health vulnerabilities of migrants and migration affected communities.

The positive relationships between IOM, regional partners and donors across Asia and the Pacific will be strengthened through the development of synergies between programme and activities, and the pooling of resources and outputs through partnerships, strengthened networks, coordination and collaboration.
Investments to facilitate multi-lateral and inter-sectoral cross- or trans-border programming will be prioritized.

**Provide secure, reliable, flexible and cost-effective health assessment services for international migrants.**

International migrants in the region depend on a variety of migration services, including pre-migration health checks. Such health examination services have to be easily accessible, reliable and provided at reasonable and transparent costs in a way that ensures full integrity and respect for the rights of the migrants concerned. Therefore, the establishment and continuation of IOM’s proven high quality health assessment services in the region wherever appropriate and possible constitutes another key activity for the Organization.

### 3. MAXIMIZING THE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF LABOUR MIGRATION

**Regional situation and challenges**

Some 25 million Asian workers are currently employed outside their home countries. The Asia-Pacific Region receives more than US$113 billion in remittances annually – the highest regional total in the world. On average, remittances in Asia and the Pacific equate to 15 per cent of exports. Although transfers make up just three per cent of regional GDP, remittances constitute a large portion of per capita income in certain countries such as Indonesia and Nepal.

Policies for managing labour migration have received increased attention from many governments in the region in recent years. There is consensus that migration needs to be managed in a way that balances the needs of economic growth and the labour market with national security, humanitarian and social concerns. However, some governments lack the capacity to develop policies which responds to the challenges and opportunities posed by migration in their countries.

Many countries in the region face the dilemma of promoting overseas employment and, at the same time, protection of their workers abroad as seeking more rights and better wages for their citizens may make them less attractive to host countries. In several countries, efforts are being made to improve migration policies and make them more protective of migrants’ rights. However, sending and receiving countries often try to shift the responsibility for protecting the rights of migrants from one to the other. This situation makes regional and inter-regional initiatives particularly attractive to move such issues forward. There is increasing interest in sharing good practice between regions to improve regional systems, such as between SAARC and ASEAN or between Asian sending and receiving countries within the Abu Dhabi Dialogue.

Inter and intra-regional highly skilled migration is also significant. For instance, Philippine professionals commonly seek better income opportunities in more developed countries, even when employment is available in their home country. However, the movement of skilled workers sometimes represent a “brain waste” with university graduates working as caregivers, nannies or other domestic workers in Europe and North America, for example.

Some countries of origin face skill shortages due to emigration. These countries are looking at new ways to satisfy domestic demand for skills and international demand. In this regard student mobility programmes become increasingly attractive.

As labour migration in the region is mostly temporary, countries have developed (or plan to develop) schemes to maximise the positive impact of temporary movements on development. This includes sustainable return and reintegration schemes, or circular migration programmes which are beneficial for both origin and destination countries. More information is needed about the effectiveness of these schemes to be able to improve them.
Maximizing the development potential of remittances to the state is a high priority. This is made difficult with money transferred through informal or illegal systems. Efforts are being made to channel remittances into the formal banking sector which will further promote development with increased access to saving and lending mechanisms to support individuals and businesses.

The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) is an inter-state initiative which provides a forum for discussion of the multi-dimensional aspects of international migration and the ways to maximize its development benefits and minimize its negative impacts. The high interest in migration and development in the region is evident from the active participation of governments in GFMD events, and the UN-hosted High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2013. The regional UN Commission—ESCAP—together with IOM works with governments and other UN agencies to support the development of a regional perspective on these issues.

**Regional priorities and strategies**

Maximizing the positive relationship between migration and development has long been a strategic focus of the work of IOM. In an era of unprecedented levels of human mobility, the need to develop a fuller understanding of the linkages between migration and development is particularly urgent, as is the need to act in practical ways to enhance the benefits migration can have for development, and to elaborate sustainable solutions for challenging migration situations.

**Policy Formulation and Implementation**

This can be done through capacity building as well as encouraging dialogue in various international and regional fora like the Colombo Process. IOM will engage its member states in regional preparations for the High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2013, and will co-chair the preparatory process in ESCAP.

**Promote and Protect Rights of Migrant Workers**

IOM will support programmes to complement the ASEAN Declaration of Promotion and Protection of Rights of Migrant Workers or the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution in addition to awareness raising and pre departure orientation/training for migrant workers. In particular, IOM will continue to support national efforts to build upon these regional frameworks for the protection of migrants. The UN Regional Thematic Working Group on migration including human trafficking can facilitate engagement in these potential areas of activity.

**Develop Return and Reintegration projects for Migrant Workers**

Return and reintegration is an important part of comprehensive labour migration management. Pilot projects with effective monitoring to assess their effectiveness and relevance need to be developed. Programmes assessing return of qualified nationals could be the key to maximizing their contribution to national development.

**Maximizing the benefits of internal migration**

Maximizing the positive relationship between migration and development has long been a strategic focus of the regional work of IOM. Given that internal population movements are growing in the Asia-Pacific Region, IOM will increase its focus on improved management of internal migration with a view to promoting livelihood opportunities, economic development and alleviating poverty. In many countries, rural development and urban planning strategies need to be further adapted to respond to key changes in the pattern of regional internal population movement in recent years (e.g. the feminization of migration, youth migration, increased movements towards cities).
There is an increasing need to develop a broader understanding of internal migration and development challenges in Asia. IOM is interested in working with researchers, policy makers, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to better collect data on migration patterns, learn from successful models, and to build the capacity of policy makers to manage internal migration in ways that contribute to development and poverty reduction. In this endeavour, IOM will also promote policy responses that better support internal migrants in accessing services especially those related to adequate housing, health, education, water, food, insurance and wages, and develop ways of maintaining social and financial links with sending communities.

Channelling remittances through the formal sector

This will be pursued by supporting programmes encouraging the financial sectors to offer attractive packages to migrant workers and their families; improving financial literacy of migrants and their families; and engaging financial institutions and promoting partnership for linking remittances to community development projects. IOM will explore possibilities for more research on the diversification of supply of financial services in order to maximize the impact of remittances in migrants’ countries of origin.

Development of Diaspora and Student Mobility programme

The Organization will look at potential programming linking diasporas to development through skills transfer. Particular attention will be given to assessments and studies examining the contribution of diaspora to remittances, investment, and in connection with Return of Qualified Nationals (RQN) programmes.

Student mobility programmes offer a good way to acquire skills at the national and international level. The Regional Office is considering options for two programmes with local Universities.

Development of migrant self-payer programmes to better facilitate migrant mobility

IOM provides assistance to facilitate migration under organized and regular migration schemes, and helps improve existing processes to make it easier, more efficient and reliable for both migrants and the governments concerned. The limited consular representation abroad of some countries in the region, among other reasons, requires innovative solutions in order to improve the migration process, particularly in the areas of health assessments, document verification, migrant information, interviews, applicant testing and logistical support.

IOM is considering options for the development of migrant self-payer programmes to better facilitate mobility and direct migrant access to services. Under this model, IOM would procure or deliver specific services on a cost recovery basis targeting migrants that are ready to pay for these services. Fee-for-services activities coordinated by IOM could include:

- Health assessments
- Pre-consular support service, including assistance with visa processing
- Language and skills development training
- Pre-departure orientation (introduction to culture/society of destination country).

Upon requests from governments, IOM could undertake a feasibility study into how it can best add value, address existing gaps in service delivery, and present comparative advantages to services available.
4. STRENGTHENING BORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Regional situation and challenges

Governments around the world are confronted with a common challenge: to facilitate movement of regular travelers and goods while maintaining secure borders. The majority of the countries in the Asia-Pacific Region have invested much time and resources into the establishment of physical border management infrastructure, particularly at main international airports, in the form of hardware, such as buildings and equipment. However, often, infrastructure is not used efficiently or at all given the lack of user understanding or skills. Data collected at the Border Crossing Points (BCPs) is not updated nor shared with the headquarters and other BCPs on a real-time basis. Further, inter-agency coordination and information sharing among relevant government ministries and entities, and partnerships with external agencies, do not occur as needed to maximize the efficiency of these systems.

Another crucial element in border management is document examination at BCPs. Travel documents are the key instruments on which frontline immigration and border control officers rely to make decisions. Officers need to be informed about the big picture behind the concept and value of travel documents. In addition, officers need to know the more micro-level details about the types, production process, and security features of documents as well as their personalization and issuance. This is a highly complex and technical field of expertise, requiring a thorough knowledge of the different phases of the travel document chain.

The use of counterfeit, forged, stolen, and other types of fraudulent travel documents is a means through which criminal entities—including smuggled peoples and trafficking victims—move across borders undetected. While the critical role that frontline officers can play in contributing to national security and upholding the rights of migrants is undeniable, this area of immigration and border control is often either neglected or considered a low priority by governments around the world. The Asia-Pacific Region is no exception. Officers are not well trained or do not have access to proper equipment to detect illegal use of travel documents and detain the users of such documents at the border before they can enter or exit a country.

Over the last two decades, immigration and border management has become a dynamic field. Related processes and systems require the concerted efforts of and close coordination among governments and international organizations. While information and data are the most powerful tools to combat irregular migration and transnational organized crime, the latest migration trends, newest technologies, and best practices in immigration and border management are often not shared among governments and relevant partner entities due to the lack of proper mechanisms and secure, user-friendly platforms for communication and information exchange.

Regional priorities and strategies

IOM’s Immigration and Border Management (IBM) activities are directed at helping governments create policy, legislation, administrative structures, operational systems and the human resource base necessary to respond effectively to diverse migration and border challenges and to institute appropriate migration governance. Such activities are designed as partnerships, with the requesting government and others working closely with IOM to identify needs, determine priority areas, and shape and deliver interventions.

In line with the IBM global objectives, IOM’s strategy in the Asia-Pacific Region aims at supporting States to enhance their border and migration management structures and procedures, protecting migrants’ rights, reducing irregular migration and smuggling, enhancing international cooperation and harmonizing national
policies and practices internally and within regional contexts towards common international norms. In
particularly, IOM considers the following activities to be the priority areas for IBM expertise and solutions in
the region:

Support governments in ensuring connectivity of border management infrastructure
Connectivity to sources, preferably real-time, should be considered as a high-priority for countries looking to
strengthen their border management systems. Emphasis will be placed on promoting partnerships and
coordination with internal as well as external entities, such as INTERPOL.

Raise awareness and build capacity of governments
There is a need to place a greater priority on training immigration and border control officers in document
examination, improving the knowledge of document examiners to infrastructure in countries to support the
recognition, interception, and analysis of fraudulent travel documents.

Facilitate the exchange of information and ensure international cooperation
This can be done by establishing viable mechanisms for governments to exchange, via secure, user-friendly
platforms and forums, state-of-the-art developments, technologies, and solutions in the immigration and
border management field. It will include hosting large-scale events like regular Border Management
Conference series as well as developing mechanisms, such as the secure website of the Bali Process.

5. DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND PREPAREDNESS

Regional situation and challenges
As one of the most risk-prone regions in the world, the Asia-Pacific is extremely vulnerable to loss of life,
economic loss and general instability as a result of disasters and other emergency situations. Over the past
20 years more than one million people have lost their lives and over five billion have been severely affected
by natural disasters. Most recent studies including the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction
2011 state that “Governments cannot influence the severity of droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis and tropical
cyclones”. Similarly, the exposure of people and assets to emergency situations is influenced by the fixed
location of historical investments in infrastructure, urban and economic development, as well as by social
and cultural attachment to place, or by geographical constraints such as on small islands. If hazard severity
cannot be reduced, the main opportunities for reducing risk lie in reducing vulnerability and exposure. Many
governments in the region, while convinced of the need to strengthen risk management strategies, have
limited capacity to develop responses without external aid.

The region experiences the highest number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in the world. At the end of
2010, some 4.6 million people were internally displaced in South and South-East Asia, 70 per cent more than
the 2.7 million IDPs in 2005 and 300,000 more than at the start of the year. The increase noted between
2005 and 2010 can almost exclusively be attributed to a rise in the number of IDPs in Pakistan and to a lesser
extent in Afghanistan (The largest return movements during 2010 took place in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the
Philippines. In Pakistan an estimated 400,000 IDPs returned home. In Afghanistan, the majority of the
victims of landmines during 2010 were IDPs or returnees. In Sri Lanka, most of the estimated 180,000 IDPs
who returned home in 2010 remained in need of protection and assistance. In the Philippines, most of the
people who had returned to their homes in Mindanao still had significant humanitarian needs in 2010.\(^4\)

\(^4\) Statistics in this section are drawn from www.internal-displacement.org.
Finally, emergency situations continue to impact directly on populations from Member and Non-Member States in the Asia-Pacific that are located in other regions of the world. IOM has extensive experience in evacuating foreign nationals from countries undergoing political and other crises. During the Arab Spring in 2011, IOM repatriated thousands of migrants from the Middle East and North Africa Region, including over 36,000 Bangladeshis, and Filipinos and other foreign nationals from Egypt and Libya. IOM also assisted to return migrant workers to their home countries during the Lebanon crisis in 2006. More recently, as part of IOM’s emergency response activities in the on-going Syrian crisis, more than 263 Overseas Filipino workers were evacuated urgently from Syria to The Philippines in early September 2012.

Regional priorities and strategies

IOM leads the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster under the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC). All IOM country offices are required to be prepared to initiate activities to protect migrants in the event of disasters as per IOM’s global obligations as a Cluster Lead. Within the context of an emergency response, synergies with non-Emergency Post-Conflict (EPC) programmes will be encouraged through the investment of resources from EPC programmes into migration management initiatives in coordination with the donors, and the use of information generated through emergency response for migration management programming.

Mainstream “preparedness” into capacity-building activities to reduce the effect of disasters, environmental degradation and conflict

IOM, over the last ten years, has carried out over 100 projects in the region directly related to assisting governments and beneficiaries to prepare for natural disasters.

IOM will focus on mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in new programming together with separate DRR programmes and initiatives to enhance populations and regional governments’ ability to prepare for, adapt to and manage the effects of disasters and conflict.

Support delivery of services targeting persons displaced internally and affected by conflict and natural disasters

IOM will support Member and non-Member States to respond to crises that adversely affect their populations. This will occur through many avenues such as Camp Coordination and Camp Management of displaced populations, the provision of shelter materials and non-food items, medical assistance and referral services, movement and logistics assistance and increasing the technical capacity of governments.

In particular, IOM will continue to provide support, such as evacuation assistance, in response to emergency situations that impact on populations of IOM Member and non-Member States in the Asia and Pacific Region.

Support recovery transition and stabilization programmes post natural disasters and conflicts

IOM will continue its longstanding involvement in activities related to recovery efforts, demobilization activities, and stabilization initiatives. It will focus on promoting the application of international norms, and that best practices are mainstreamed and Member and non-Member States drive the process toward further development.

Historically, IOM’s EPC activities link to programming that leads to development, and managed migration. IOM will ensure that simultaneously with emergency programming it will begin to mainstream

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6. PROMOTING COMPREHENSIVE APPROACHES TO MIGRATION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Regional situation and challenges

Environmental factors have long had an impact on global migration flows, as people have historically left places with harsh or deteriorating conditions. However, the scale of such flows, both internal and cross-border, is expected to rise as a result of accelerated climate change, with unprecedented impacts on lives and livelihoods. Climate change and environmental degradation are therefore playing an increasingly important role in inducing the movement of people. Such migration can have positive and negative effects on both the local coping capacity and the environment in areas from which these migrants originate, as well as in their temporary or permanent destinations.

Migration, climate change and the environment are interrelated. Just as environmental degradation and disasters can cause migration, movement of people can also have significant effects on surrounding ecosystems. This needs to be addressed in a holistic manner, taking into account other possible mitigating factors including, inter alia, human security, human and economic development, livelihood strategies and conflict.

Migration often seems to be misperceived as a failure to adapt to a changing environment. Instead, migration can also be an adaptation strategy to climate and environmental change and is an essential component of the socio-environmental interactions that needs to be managed. Migration can be a coping mechanism and survival strategy for those who move. At the same time, migration, and mass migration in particular, can also have significant environmental repercussions for areas of origin, areas of destination, and the migratory routes in between and contribute to further environmental degradation.

Multiple factors indicate that the Asia-Pacific Region possesses a high degree of vulnerability to climate change. Many nations within the region already struggle to cope with the current climate variability to which they are exposed including tropical cyclones, rainfall extremes, frequent droughts, and extreme tides. Currently, regional cooperation and national response capacity to deal with climate change-induced migration remains underdeveloped.

A review of 186 different regional and national estimates of the potential impacts of future climate change to various sectors within the Asia-Pacific region confirms that the region faces significant challenges. At the regional level, 62% of impact estimates indicated clear adverse consequences, and only 19% indicated clear benefits, with the remaining 20% suggesting the direction of impacts could lean either way. At the national level, 58% of estimates indicated adverse effects, and only 14% indicated benefits. Furthermore, studies indicated that different sectors have different vulnerabilities to climate change.

Climate change adaptation is one issue on which the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Parties made significant progress in 2010. At a Conferences of the Parties (COP) meeting in December 2010, the Cancun Adaptation Framework was adopted, inviting governments to link their implementation of climate change adaptation to other policies and processes, including the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). Given that most adaptation programming has been indistinguishable from Disaster Risk Management (DRM), these agreements will potentially increase the resources available for risk

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6 Statistics in this section are drawn from www.csiru.au, Climate Change in the Asia/Pacific Region
reduction in general. There is growing momentum towards the integration of climate change adaptation and DRM into national development planning and investment. However, in most countries, institutional and programme mechanisms are managed separately and are weakly coordinated. Both DRM and adaptation need to be integrated into national development planning and investment, local governance should be strengthened, and partnerships with civil society facilitated.  

Regional priorities and strategies
Sound migration management is needed to enhance the potential of migration to help people adapt to a changing environment while minimizing the negative repercussions of environmental migration. IOM’s central objectives in managing environmental migration are:

1. to prevent forced migration resulting from environmental factors to the extent possible;
2. where forced migration does occur, to provide assistance and protection to affected populations, and seek durable solutions to their situation;
3. to undertake evidence based research to contribute to better understanding and informed interventions and responses to climate induced movement;
4. to facilitate migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change.

IOM will continue to promote its comprehensive migration management approach to the complex linkages between climate change, the environment and migration. Through its activities, IOM helps to reduce the vulnerability of populations exposed to environmental risk factors; assists populations on the move as a result of environmental causes; and builds the capacities of governments and other actors to face the challenge of environmental migration. Given the dearth of research and data on climate change-environment-migration in the region, IOM will endeavour to undertake evidence based research and mapping of the climate vulnerable migration areas in the region. Policy advice and support to community based organizations and affected population and communities will also remain a focus, and for this collaboration and partnership with regional organizations will also be explored.

V. THE WAY FORWARD

The Regional Strategy is a five year strategic vision for the Asia and Pacific region. IOM will review it mid-term in consultation with key partners to ensure implementation is progressing and priorities areas are current and sufficiently flexible to meet emerging regional needs.

IOM looks forward to continuing to work with partners to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities presented by the complex and diverse nature of migration in the region.

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7 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2011
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