IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.
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INTRODUCTION

Asia and the Pacific is a dynamic region. Home to nearly 60 per cent of the world's population, the region is marked by sustained growth and deepening connectivity. The migration and mobility landscape is equally dynamic, diverse and complex. IOM has had a presence in the region for decades, with a full range of programmes supporting governments and migrants, men and women, young and old through well-established cooperation with partners.

This is an era of unprecedented mobility where one in seven people globally are migrants. In September 2016, world leaders gathered for the UN high-level meeting to address large movements of refugees and migrants, and adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.¹ Included in the Declaration was a commitment by UN Members States to negotiate a Global Compact on Migration by 2018. Of particular note, the high-level summit also saw IOM admitted into the UN system.

These developments took place one year after the adoption of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (SDG), which recognizes migration’s contribution to development. This includes Sustainable Development Goal target 10.7: “facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.” Reflecting the “multidimensionality of migration,” a variety of other SDGs—such as those related to poverty reduction, quality education, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, peace and justice, good health and well-being, and sustainable cities and partnership—include elements of human mobility.

Relevant global commitments and frameworks relating to migration, mobility and displacement include the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Samoa Pathway, World Humanitarian Summit, the Paris Agreement (COP 21), New Urban Agenda, and the 2008 World Health Assembly Resolution on the Health of Migrants. The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) continues to bring together countries to advance cooperation on mutually-reinforcing links between migration and development.

IOM’s strategy for Asia and the Pacific 2017-2020 is aligned with the MiGOF and aims to contribute to the implementation of the abovementioned global commitments and frameworks. Key among these commitments are the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact on Migration.

In a time of unprecedented mobility, IOM’s thesis is that migration is: inevitable (given various drivers in the interconnected and interdependent world that we, the international community, have created), necessary (if skills are to be available to fill jobs in order for economies to flourish); and desirable (in terms of the benefits that it brings to migrants themselves and their families and, in turn, for the contributions that they make in countries of origin, transit and destination). IOM’s vision is for a world in which migrants move because of genuine choice rather than desperate necessity, in which the rights of migrants are protected throughout their journeys, and in which migration is well-governed and a positive force for all the world’s peoples and societies.

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3 The Economist Intelligence Unit, Measuring well-governed migration: The 2016 Migration Governance Index. (The Economist Intelligence Unit, London, 2016).
IOM in Asia and the Pacific will continue to support the priorities of its member states and assist migrants, while working closely with a broad range of partners, including regional and multilateral partners, UN counterparts (including via UN Country Teams), civil society, the private sector, and academic and research institutions.

Contributing to the key global frameworks and initiatives mentioned above, IOM will support regional frameworks, blueprints, plans of actions and programmes, including those developed by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), as well as key Regional Consultative Processes (RCP) and inter-regional dialogues.

The regional strategy presents IOM’s overall strategic framework focusing on the key migration priorities for Asia and the Pacific 2017–2020. It builds on the Organization’s long-term experience in the region, gained through efforts aimed at reducing the vulnerability of migrants, direct operational support, as well as technical assistance to governments and key partners. It builds on programming and well-established collaboration at both the country and regional levels, and offers a joint framework to guide IOM country offices to better support migrants and countries, both in meeting persistent and emerging migration challenges and harnessing opportunities for migrants and societies.

To do so, the regional strategy emphasizes strengthening existing partnerships and forging new ones around migration, humanitarian assistance, the migration-development nexus, and security in countries where IOM’s programming objectives intersect with those of partners such as the UN, the private sector, civil society, academic institutions and diaspora communities.

Given the vast and diverse nature of the Asia and the Pacific region and its mobility landscape, the regional strategy consists of multiple sub-regional strategies, covering the Pacific, Southeast Asia, East Asia, South Asia and Southwest Asia as well as cross-cutting priorities between the five sub-regions. Each sub-regional strategy addresses the migration dynamics of and priorities of different parts of this vast region.

The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) based in Bangkok, Thailand, takes the lead on such cross-cutting priorities, and coordinates monitoring and evaluation across the region.

In the regional strategy, international and regional standards and migrants’ rights (MIGOF Principle One) provides the basis of all outcomes, while gender is similarly mainstreamed in line with the Organization’s reinforced efforts.
In 2017-2020, IOM in the Asia and the Pacific region will work towards achieving the following outcomes under the regional strategy:

- Protection of and assistance to migrants in need is enhanced;
- Health vulnerability among migrants and migration-affected communities is reduced;
- Strengthened systems and tailored solutions that harness the benefits of migration are available;
- Capacity to manage migration crises is strengthened;
- Migrants and affected communities’ resilience to natural disasters and adaptation to climate change is strengthened;
- Policies and programmes are based on evidence and systematic monitoring and analysis of migration dynamics; and,
- Partnerships and dialogues to address migration challenges and opportunities in the region are enhanced.
There are an estimated 244 million international migrants in the world, with an estimated 40 million residing in the Asia and Pacific region. At the same time, 30 per cent of all international migrants spread across the world—approximately 74 million migrants—originate in Asia and the Pacific.\(^4\) With migration taking place not only from the global south to the global north, but also south to south, the Asia and Pacific region has some of the world’s largest migration corridors. It is a dynamic region that has seen significant developmental gains. For example, in 15 years that the world moved from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals, extreme poverty in the region has halved. The region has also seen rapid urbanization, driven in part by migration.\(^5\) Seventeen of the world’s 31 ‘mega cities’ are to be found in Asia and the Pacific. The scale of mobility in the region remains large, with diverse and complex patterns. The full range of migration drivers are evident in these flows, ranging from income inequality and demography to conflict and the environmental impact of climate change. Almost half of the migrants are female, and the ratio is often higher for specific origin countries and sectors, such as domestic work.


Migration statistics in the region do not always capture the full scope of migration dynamics, in part due to the difficulty of measuring temporary, circular and, especially irregular mobility. Given the region’s long and porous land and sea borders, there is also significant intra- and extra-regional irregular migration in Asia and the Pacific, including migration that is facilitated by smugglers. While much of the irregular flow is believed to occur between neighbouring countries, irregular migration routes are also known to extend much further, over land and by sea, to connect non-contiguous states.

Irregular migration in the region is known to exacerbate migrants’ vulnerabilities, resulting in poor health, lack of social protection, and discrimination, while exposing them to abuse and exploitation. Migrants in the region are also disproportionately targeted by human traffickers, and are subjected to many associated forms of exploitation, including forced labour, debt bondage and other slavery-like practices. Human trafficking affects men, women and children in sectors that include agriculture, construction, fishing, and hospitality, as well as the sex industry.

With rapid economic development in some parts of the region, there are significant risks of abuse and exploitation along the labour supply chains of multinational companies. Furthermore, there are unaccompanied children on the move throughout Asia and the Pacific, as well as widespread instances of families left behind, including children; a considerable individual and social cost of migration.

Despite efforts by national governments and their partners across the region, there remain numerous opportunities to enhance the protection of and assistance to migrants through greater coordination and cooperation between and within states. Such efforts have to be underpinned by multi-sectoral approaches and evidence-informed policies, and a commitment to continually increase technical capacities at sub-national, national and regional levels.

While the majority of migrants moving to, from or within Asia and the Pacific may be young and healthy prior to migration, persistent threats to their protection and well-being such as those outlined above mean that many are exposed to serious health risks, even when they migrate via regular channels. With some exceptions, most countries in the region have limited capacity and systems in place for including migrants in national health programs and services. For several prevalent communicable diseases in the Asia and Pacific region, such as malaria and tuberculosis, governments and the World Health Organization (WHO) see migrants as Key Affected Populations who are at greater risk of exposure to illness due to their limited access to health services, further compounding their vulnerability.

The link between human mobility and global health security is also an increasingly important factor considered by IOM, particularly in the context of increasing volume and ease of mobility within and across the region. Reducing health vulnerability among migrants and migration-affected communities therefore remains a priority. It will require: successful integration of migrants and mobile population into national health systems; the increased inclusion of migrants (e.g. SDG 3.8 on Achieving Universal Health Coverage); evidence-informed responses along mobility pathways; and enhancing national and regional capacities within health and non-health sectors to better promote the health of migrants and their communities.

From time to time in recent years, complex migration flows within the region have surged, overwhelming the existing capacities and response mechanisms of national authorities. These surges involve large increases in displaced people and contribute to large numbers of asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons, and stateless people. In 2016, these populations totalled more than 9.5 million people in the region and spread across several protracted refugee situations, including Afghanistan. Building on efforts such as resettlement to assist these populations, there is an increasing need to focus on strengthening capacities to manage responses to migration crises.

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Additionally, the Asia and Pacific region is among the most prone to natural disaster and the negative impacts of environmental degradation and climate change. This vulnerability has contributed to large numbers of persons in Asia and the Pacific—equivalent to an estimated 85 per cent or 16.2 million of the world’s total internally-displaced population in 2015—being internally-displaced due to sudden onset of natural disasters.\(^8\) Given the challenges posed by displacement driven by natural disaster and climatic changes across the region, including the health and safety of displaced and host populations, there is a significant need to strengthen migrants’ and affected communities’ resilience to natural disaster and adaptation to climate change.

Migrant vulnerabilities and environmental trends notwithstanding, the Asia and Pacific region has achieved gains from the developmental impact of migration. While migrants and diaspora communities transfer more than just financial support to home communities—including human, social and cultural resources—seven of the top 10 remittance recipient countries in 2016 are located in the region, including India, China, Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Viet Nam, and Indonesia. Remittance factors significantly in GDP figures in countries like Nepal and Samoa (32.2 and 20 per cent, respectively).\(^8\) Among the youth of the region, student mobility across borders is relatively high,\(^{10}\) although unemployment or mismatch of skills is a concern in both developing and developed countries.

Equipping migrants with skills—before, during and post-migration, as well as promoting and supporting their ethical recruitment—is essential to harness the benefits of migration for both individual migrants and their communities. This requires system-wide efforts, involving both the public and private sectors.

In recent years there have been efforts within Asia and the Pacific to mainstream migration into development plans or to add multi-sectoral integrated approaches to migration policies at the national and/or sub-national levels. Countries including Bangladesh, Philippines and the Republic of Korea have all launched initiatives, and the opportunity exists to scale up these efforts, specifically in relation to SDG target 10.7 on well-managed migration policies and mainstreaming migration into development. In response to the general lack of data on migration, such efforts will require increased data and research capacities for evidence-informed policies, responses and collaboration.

Reflecting the scale of migration across the region, there are presently several active bilateral, regional and inter-regional cooperation arrangements and dialogues that address migration. They include initiatives led by and involving regional entities such ASEAN, SAARC, PIF or a cooperation framework such as the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) cooperation. There are also several active RCPs on migration, including the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (‘Bali Process’); the Ministerial Consultation on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia (the ‘Colombo Process’); and the Asia-EU Dialogue on Labour Migration (‘Abu Dhabi Process’). There are also intra-regional forums such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. Furthermore, there is also active engagement of civil society and the private sector across the region. With mobility increasing across the region, these existing and emerging partnerships need to be further enhanced to effectively meet the challenges and opportunities posed by the full range of migration trends across Asia and the Pacific.


\(^{10}\) Asian Development Bank, Labor, Migration and Student Mobility, (Manila, 2014)
Rice paddy workers head home to their villages after a day of working in the rice fields in Siem Reap province, Cambodia

© IOM 2016 (Photo: Muse Mohammed)
IOM in Asia and the Pacific covers 39 countries with regular activities on-going in 31 countries as of December 2016. It supports migrants, host communities and governments, while working closely with regional and multilateral partners, key UN counterparts (including UN Country Teams), civil society, the private sector, and academic and research institutions. IOM also supports regular migration dialogues and several RCPs, including the Colombo Process and the Bali Process.

As of December 2016, IOM has 2,323 staff in the region and an operational presence through its Country Offices. Reflecting the diverse and complex migration landscape of the region, the Organization has well-established collaboration with governments, multi-lateral partners, civil society and the private sector on a full range of activities, including:

- Movement, emergency and post-crisis migration management, including resettlement and repatriation; emergency preparedness, response and risk reduction; and recovery, transition, and stabilization support;
- Migration health, including migration health assessments, health promotion and assistance for migrants, and health assistance for crisis-affected communities;
- Labour migration, migration and economic/community development, and return of qualified nationals;
- Migration, environment and climate change;
- Technical cooperation and capacity building on immigration and border management;
- Migrant assistance, including voluntary return and reintegration assistance, and counter-trafficking; and
- Migration policy and research.
IOM’s capacities include direct operational support to migrants and communities, technical assistance and capacity building for member states, and support for migration dialogues and regional processes. It also conducts data collection and academic research in support of these activities, including those carried out by its Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) and Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) initiative.

The ROAP coordinates activities in the region and supports the Country Offices and regional initiatives. It engages with partners at the regional level, including the other UN regional offices and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific (UN ESCAP). It collaborates also through the Regional Coordination Mechanism and UN Development Group –Asia and the Pacific and Inter-Agency Standing Committee. ROAP also works with regional and multilateral frameworks and institutions such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Pacific Island Forum (PIF), as well as the regional development banks such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
IOM SUB-REGIONS WITHIN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Pacific

Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

The Pacific sub-region includes the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), as well as Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand. The sub-region is made up of thousands of islands spread over an area of tens of millions of square kilometres. It has a total population of approximately 39 million people, ranging from countries with 10 thousand inhabitants (Tuvalu) to 23 million (Australia). Pacific Islanders in particular have been described as one of the most mobile groups anywhere in the world.

There are, however, numerous migration challenges. The sub-region includes some of the world’s most aid-dependent nations, which have had difficulty achieving sustained economic growth and human development targets. This has been increasingly exacerbated by climate change which restricts livelihood options, increases demand on limited resources, and pushes people to either migrate temporarily or relocate permanently, both internally and internationally.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the largest and most populated country in the Pacific, under threat from the impacts of environmental and climatic changes. For PNG, both slow-onset processes and rapid onset events are a reality and cause high rates of displacement. PNG has relatively low levels international migration, and according to the World Bank there is a great scope to strengthen temporary migration schemes between PNG, Australia and New Zealand, and utilize these schemes as strategies for development and stabilization of PNG.

11 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, Trends in International Migrant Stock: the 2015 Revision
According to the PICT UN Country Team’s recent Meta-Analysis report, there are significant opportunities to support the role of migration as a constructive development force and achieve major benefits. For example, labour migration schemes should provide equal opportunities for men and women. They also must safeguard the social protection and human rights of migrants. Investment is needed in skills development programmes to leverage the impact of labour mobility. Additionally, there is a need for recognition and harmonization of qualifications throughout the Pacific region, and to ensure an alignment with the qualifications and accreditation systems in key destination countries, in particular Australia and New Zealand.

Pacific Island countries are among the most exposed to natural hazards and climate change, facing a recurring threat of cyclones, floods, droughts and rising sea levels. Their vulnerability to these phenomena is partly a result of their geographical remoteness and isolation, as well as economic and social challenges. There is a direct relationship between climatic events and displacement of people in the Pacific; with the region having a “disproportionately high disaster risk,” displacement relative to population size is consistently high. This has been manifest in several recent natural disasters, including Cyclone Pam in 2015 that led to the displacement of a quarter and a half of the populations of Vanuatu and Tuvalu, respectively. Although Pacific Island states have established institutions to support natural disaster response, risk reduction and mitigation, remaining challenges include disaster response logistics and assets, infrastructure and human resources. The lack of such inputs and assets can result in increased vulnerability to population displacement, which in turn gives rise to acute protection and humanitarian needs.

Social challenges in the Pacific sub region include high rates of Violence against Women and Girls, and insufficient sexual and reproductive health rights and gender equality. There is also evidence of trafficking in human beings throughout the region, in particular linked to certain sectors with high informal labour mobility, such as logging and mining. These, coupled with inadequate protection and assistance services, especially for women, are critical areas for intervention under this strategy.

Both Australia and New Zealand have deeply-entrenched migration histories. Almost half of the people living in Australia today are either migrants or children of migrants, and Australia continues to be a major destination country for humanitarian and other permanent immigrants as well as temporary migrants. New Zealand also has a humanitarian migration programme, as well as several free movement agreements with countries in the Pacific, and bilateral seasonal worker schemes with others. Australia and New Zealand work with their neighbours and international organizations to develop a comprehensive regional approach to deterring people smuggling activities. Australia is the co-chair with Indonesia of the more than 45 member Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime.

13 UN Country Team in the Pacific, UN Strategic Framework for the Pacific (UNSFP) 2018-2022, Common Country Analysis (CCA) – Meta Analysis (2016). Note that this report covers the 14 PICTs covered by the UNCTs based in Suva and Apia.


15 Ibid.

Southeast Asia

Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam

All Southeast Asian countries are members of ASEAN, with the exception of Timor-Leste, whose membership application is currently under consideration. The sub-region has an aggregate nominal GDP of USD 2.4 trillion, presently the sixth-largest economy in the world and projected to become the fourth-largest after the European Union, the United States and China by 2030. Unlike rapidly aging East Asia, the median age in Southeast Asia remains one of the world’s youngest and the working age population is not expected to decline until 2055. Migrant stock statistics indicate that out of approximately 20.2 million migrants originating in Southeast Asia, almost 6.9 million move within the region, up from 1.5 million in 1990, with the remainder moving mainly to East Asia and the Gulf countries. Movements within the region mainly involve temporary and/or undocumented migrants, with most employed in low- and semi-skilled work places in the informal sector.

Rural to urban migration is one of the major factors behind rapid urbanization in the region. In light of the economic and demographic projections, coupled with the existing development gap and deepening regional connectivity, migration is anticipated to increase both within the sub-region and beyond.

Against the backdrop of these trends, governments in the sub-region have increased their cooperation around labour mobility through bilateral arrangements, various steps taken by ASEAN to promote the protection of migrant workers, and initiatives towards freer movement of skilled labour under the ASEAN Economic Community blueprint. While building on these gains, there is a pressing need for increasing the protection of migrant workers by developing more efficient and transparent legal channels of labour mobility, especially in the low-skilled sectors, and promoting greater private sector engagement in addressing forced labour and human trafficking in labour supply chains.

19 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, Trends in International Migrant Stock: the 2015 Revision
20 East Asia Forum, ‘ASEAN Labouring under Outdated Migration Policies’ (2014): 47.7% of the ASEAN populations living in urban areas. ASEAN (2016)
There is also a need to boost the quality of workers migrating through existing channels by means of enhanced skills recognition frameworks and ensuring the health of labour migrants. Equipping migrant workers with skills before, during or upon return enables them not only to access better paid jobs with decent employment conditions, but also to utilize their skills, experiences, and savings more effectively upon return in support of local and regional development, especially in emerging economies such as Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia. The capacities of countries in Southeast Asia also need to be strengthened to respond to the potentially negative social impacts of labour migration, including families’ left-behind, labour shortages, and growing social and economic disparities.

Irregular migration remains a challenge in Southeast Asia, with migrants at risk of being abused, exploited or trafficked while at the same time vulnerable to various health risks. Smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons is persistent both within the sub-region and among migrants destined for other regions, and includes exploitation in the fishing, agriculture, construction and domestic work sectors. In 2015, IOM assisted 1,564 victims of trafficking in Southeast Asia, approximately 85 per cent of whom were men in situations of forced labour; 7 per cent of the survivors assisted were children.

Building on national, bilateral, and regional efforts, including through ASEAN, this regional strategy recognises that it is critical to expand human security through multi-sectoral efforts that include enhancing the protection of all people on the move and addressing transnational crime through proactive approaches, all the while continuing to assist the most vulnerable that fall prey to exploitation and abuse.

The region has recently also seen crises resulting from large-scale complex flows of migrants and refugees, triggered by factors that include political upheaval, sectarian violence, environmental hazards and economic crises. These movements have led to situations that have overwhelmed national governments’ capacities to manage responses, ending in humanitarian crises for migrants and their communities. For example, during the 2014-2015 winter season, 83,000 migrants, mainly from Bangladesh and Myanmar, resorted to irregular maritime migration, with Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia as the main transit and receiving countries. Regional efforts are under way to improve preparedness for maritime flows and curb further irregular maritime migration, while also facilitating legal means of migration.

The Southeast Asia sub-region is also among the most prone to natural disasters, exacerbated by climate change, resulting in significant displacement and fatalities. From 2004 to 2014, an estimated 191 million people in the sub-region were displaced temporarily by natural disasters and an additional 193 million people was affected by natural disasters. The countries of the Mekong Delta, along with Indonesia and the Philippines, are at high risk of coastal erosion, flooding and cyclones. The frequency and scale of recent natural disasters often overwhelms regional and national disaster management capacities.

This regional strategy recognises the importance of supporting governments to strengthen their disaster risk management capacities — particularly at the sub-national levels — and expand community-based approaches to prepare for and respond to climate-related hazards, in line with global and regional frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER).

The scale and nature of fluid internal and cross-border population movements within the Southeast Asia sub-region has significant implications for the health status of migrants, and for broader public health efforts. For example, governments, WHO and health partners see migrants as “Key Affected Populations” for malaria elimination, requiring specific and targeted outreach and service provision, and enhanced multi-sectoral collaboration with non-health sectors such as immigration, labour and infrastructure, among others.

Governments and partners are also increasingly recognising the critical importance of migrants’ inclusion within national health systems, but acknowledge that they have limited capacity, knowledge and resources. They frequently look to IOM for technical and operational support, and for resources on how to systematically address the challenges involved.
There is an opportunity for Southeast Asian countries and the sub-region as a whole to build on and reinforce regional commitments, frameworks and partnerships within ASEAN and the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), including several RCPs, the Bali Process, the COMMIT initiative, and the Colombo Process, among others. ASEAN Community Vision 2025, which is seen as reinforcing the SDGs, has multiple migration and mobility elements across the three blueprints. As the countries of Southeast Asia progress towards middle- and high-income country status in the coming years, they can expect greater mobility to and within the region as a whole, with increasing return migration, mobility of foreign highly-skilled nationals, and diaspora engagement.

Southeast Asia can reap the full benefit of migration for development by investing in a wide range of migration measures, including mainstreaming migration into national development initiatives, enhancing public-private partnerships, ensuring the involvement of civil society groups, and empowering migrants and diaspora communities. Increasing migration knowledge and data collection will be critical in informing and supporting all the above efforts.

IOM will work toward the following main outcomes in Southeast Asia for 2017–2020:

- Safe, regular and healthy labour mobility through increased protection of migrant workers is ensured;
- Strategies are developed and capacities scaled up to prevent irregular migration, trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants;
- Strategies are developed and capacities enhanced to address the causes of large irregular movements and to provide appropriate humanitarian and health responses to such movements;
- Capacity to prepare for and respond to natural and human-made disasters is strengthened at national, sub-national and community levels, contributing to increased resilience;
- Partnerships and dialogues to mainstream migration in national initiatives are in place and enhanced.
East Asia

People’s Republic of China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea

East Asia is home to 1.6 billion people or about 22 per cent of the world’s population, and generates USD 16.4 trillion in GDP, equivalent to 21.7 per cent of global total. East Asian countries vary greatly in size and their stage of development. Japan and the Republic of Korea are mature economies with slower growth rates (between 1 and 2 per cent per annum) and higher median ages, 46 and 40 respectively. After staggering GDP growth from 2010 to 2014, Mongolia’s economic growth has significantly slowed since 2015. China attained 6.9 per cent growth in 2015 and is the world’s second largest economy.

East Asia is also the world’s fastest aging sub-region, with the percentage of older people projected to constitute 37 per cent of the population by 2050, up from 17 per cent in 2015. This will likely result in growing labour gaps.22

Migration has played a large role in the development of the sub-region. Internal migration is significant, with an estimated 150 million rural-to-urban migrants in China alone driving rapid urbanization. As a result of several factors, including natural hazards and climate change, rural-to-urban migration has grown significantly in Mongolia. The share of the urban population has increased to 67 per cent of the total population, putting a strain on the provision of social services.

By contrast, international migration makes up a small portion of the broader sub-regional migration dynamic, although it has been increasing. Migrants and diaspora from the region have also played a role in development, with remittances totalling over 76 billion.23 Student mobility from East Asia is high but there are also increasing numbers of people coming to the sub-region to study.

With the aforementioned demographic and economic shifts likely to lead to greater internal and international migration in coming years, countries in the sub-region will continue to have opportunities to maximise the benefits of migration by adjusting their policies and programmes for mobility and development.

East Asia is also affected by irregular migration, including both migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons. Trafficking for forced marriages is a major migration issue linking Southeast and East Asia, along with other forms of sexual exploitation and labour exploitation, both internal and cross-border.

The sub-region is not immune to the migration dynamics of complex and large flows impacting many countries in the world, such as those currently seen in Europe. There are already on-going efforts to protecting those also impacted, for example through refugee resettlement in Japan and the Republic of Korea. Given these projected trends, it is important that migration management systems and responses are strengthened to meet persistent challenges and changing needs, including through integrated, multi-sectoral approaches aimed at reducing the vulnerability of people on the move.

Finally, the more advanced economies in the sub-region have strong engagement in the region and in the world for economic, trade and investment. They are also actively engaged in humanitarian and development support. The private sectors are also engaged in these areas. Given these engagement, strong partnerships can further support increased knowledge and understanding of migration and development, promoting ethical recruitment, in line with the SDGs and other global and regional frameworks.

IOM will work toward the following main outcomes in East Asia for 2017–2020:

• Migration governance is promoted and strengthened;
• Effective migration management responses to meet various migration challenges are in place;
• Partnership for regional and global engagement, including public private partnership on mobility and development, is enhanced.

23 World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (updated as of October 2016).
South Asia

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

South Asia is home to 1.8 billion people or approximately 25 per cent of the global population, and is presently one of the fastest growing developing sub-regions in the world.\(^{24}\) By 2050, it is projected that three-quarters of all population growth in Asia and the Pacific will occur in South and Southwest Asia, making the sub-region home to the largest workforce in the world. Remittances to the sub-region already have a sizable volume, with Indian and Bangladeshi nationals remitting an estimated USD 68.9 billion and USD 15.4 billion in 2015, respectively.\(^{25}\)

With over 15.6 per cent of international migrants (an estimated 36 million people) and more than 2 million people migrating annually, internal and cross-border migration is likely to continue to increase as South Asia experiences a youth bulge. A long-standing major geographic region of origin for migrants, South Asia is now increasingly associated with transit and final destination.

While an increasing number of flows within the sub-region involve students moving to pursue higher education, the vast majority remain labour migrants. While the small group migrating to Europe and North America is highly-skilled, the majority of migrants from South Asia seek employment in the Gulf countries where they are typically concentrated in low- or semi-skilled positions, with most men employed in the construction and hospitality sectors, and women in domestic work.

Despite many positive outcomes for both migrants and origin and destination countries, the individual and social costs of migration are high, including lack of decent work, exposure to health risks, deaths among migrants from this sub-region, and families left behind. Given the highly commercialized recruitment processes in which some agencies circumvent regulations intended to protect migrants, the causes of the abovementioned vulnerabilities also include malpractice involving high fees and misrepresentation of the jobs on offer, contract substitution, low wages, and a heavy debt burden on migrants.

There is a pressing need to promote private sector engagement especially in relation to adopting ethical recruitment practices, reinforcing migrants’ awareness of their rights, and supporting their access to remedies in case of rights violations, among other safe migration practices. Additionally, to reap the full benefits of labour mobility, countries can benefit from long-term labour market planning whereby skills development for migrants and mutual recognition of skills are integrated and promoted between countries of origin and destination, enabling, for example, skills gained by migrants abroad to be recognised or upgraded upon return. There is also a need to address the health of migrants and their families along the mobility continuum, from pre-departure to destination and upon eventual return.


\(^{25}\) World Bank, Annual Remittances Data (updated as of April 2017).
At present, irregular and undocumented movements, human trafficking and smuggling of migrants all remain pressing challenges. In South Asia, most trafficking victims are men exploited for forced labour, as well as children whose numbers are disproportionately large compared to other sub-regions. Restrictive labour markets in key destination countries lead many South Asian migrants to resort to irregular channels to migrate to neighbouring regions despite the risks involved. Comprehensive efforts to address trafficking in persons and smuggling are required, and need to include strengthened awareness-raising among migrants and potential migrants on the options for safe migration and their rights.

A range of natural disasters—including floods, glacial lake outburst floods, storm surges, droughts, cyclones and earthquakes—pose a continuing threat to the countries of South Asia. In 2015, earthquakes displaced 2.8 million people in Nepal, while floods and cyclones displaced a further 3.6 million in India and Bangladesh. Across rural communities in the sub-region, prolonged droughts or flooding have already significantly reduced crop yields, prompting mass population movements to cities where basic services are too overstretched to keep pace with rising numbers of migrants.

Consequently, recent migrants who live in informal settlements, on the exposed fringes of cities or on remote islands without access to services often find themselves particularly vulnerable to natural hazards. As climate change and environmental degradation intensify the frequency and severity of weather events, there is a continuing need for governments to invest in climate change adaptation, disasters preparedness and development of greater capacity to deal with climate migration, including in the context of urbanization.

As the countries of South Asia move forward with implementing the SDGs as part of their national development plans, they can learn and build on the experiences of others in the sub-region, for example, from the experiences of Bangladesh in mainstreaming migration into national development planning. Furthermore, South Asian nations can reinforce the cooperation they have through bilateral and regional partnerships, including SAARC’s Kathmandu Declaration, regional efforts on DRR and response, and RCPs such as the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue.

As South Asia holds the Chairmanship of both the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, the region can also make substantive contributions to global initiatives on migration, in particular the Global Compact on Migration, through the RCPs as well as national level initiatives. Many of the national and regional cooperation necessitate stronger partnerships between governments, non-governmental actors, and the private sector (including recruitment agencies).

IOM will work toward the following main outcomes in South Asia for 2017–2020:

- Regional and national capacities and partnerships on ethical recruitment, skills development and migrant health are strengthened;
- National capacities and regional cooperation are strengthened to: i) respond to natural disasters and conflict; ii) find durable solutions and progressively resolve displacement situations; iii) increase knowledge to address the mobility dimensions of climate change;
- National capacities and regional collaboration are enhanced to combat transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling;
- Sustainable return and reintegration mechanisms are strengthened;
- Data collection, analysis and sharing is increased in support of planning and implementing national initiatives and regional measures arising from SAARC and the Colombo Process;
- Regional and national capacities are strengthened to advance regional partnerships (including on the SDGs, SAARC’s Kathmandu Declaration, and the Colombo Process) and to contribute to global initiatives on migration.

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Southwest Asia

Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan.

Southwest Asia is characterised by strong population and migration dynamics. The sub-region includes origin, transit and destination countries, and has a mostly young population. Pakistan and Iran continue to host an estimated 5 million refugees and undocumented migrants from Afghanistan. Decades of conflict have caused mass internal displacements in the sub-region, with 1.4 million internally displaced persons living in Pakistan and over 1.2 million in Afghanistan. Irregular, circular intra-sub-regional flows are also common, with over 40,000 people transiting from Afghanistan to Pakistan each day. There circular movements of Afghans to Pakistan and Iran are motivated by ease of access, security and political considerations, as well as a desire for better living and employment conditions.

2016 saw a major increase in the return of Afghan nationals from Pakistan and Iran, with some 722,000 undocumented Afghans returning due to a number of push factors that include a deteriorating protection space in Pakistan. This return movement has been coupled with record levels of conflict-induced internal displacement in Afghanistan. Intensified conflict throughout Afghanistan, combined with large-scale returns and rapid urbanization has compounded the strain on already overstretched local services (particularly health and education) and livelihood opportunities, which in turn increases the vulnerability of migrants and host communities. Youth unemployment is high. Similar social conditions exist in border areas, exacerbated constantly by complex migration flows.
Migration to Europe has attracted significant attention due to the presence of migrants from this sub-region on Mediterranean smuggling routes in the context of the “Mediterranean crisis”. These complex flows are not only directed to Europe but also to elsewhere in the Asia and Pacific region. To respond more effectively to the multifaceted challenges posed by the complexity of these large scale cross-border flows—including the specific challenges of organized crime and terrorism—it is now increasingly important for countries in the sub-region to adopt an integrated border management approach, and to strengthen their capacities to absorb the return of migrants, especially in Afghanistan.27

The sub-region has potential to reap the development benefits of migration through engagement of its nationals in the diaspora, including, for example, over 8 million Pakistanis living and working abroad. Transfer of skills and knowledge, as proven through IOM’s Return of Qualified Afghan Nationals programme, can support countries’ recovery and rebuilding efforts. Several bilateral, regional and extra-regional dialogues and cooperation including the SAARC and Regional Consultative Processes on migration support these efforts. More can be done to harness the developmental potential of migration in Southwest Asia as well as to address the root causes of displacement and irregular migration—realising these opportunities could be achieved through the support that the UN is providing to countries to attain SDG-related targets.

Timely data and analyses of key migration dynamics in the sub-region—building on efforts that include the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) initiative—remain critical in support of both short- and mid- to long-term responses to migration challenges and national development, supported as much as possible by partnerships and regional and inter-regional migration dialogues.28

IOM will work toward the following main outcomes in Southwest Asia for 2017–2020:

- Understanding and knowledge of internal and complex inter-regional flows within and out of the sub-region is improved;
- Migration management and protection of migrants is strengthened through closer collaboration and dialogues in the sub-region, as well as through measures that include voluntary returns and reintegration, and integrated border management;
- Migration is mainstreamed into national development planning, including through the adoption of whole-of-government approaches.
ANNEX

1. Acronym

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AADMER</td>
<td>ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>The Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRR</td>
<td>Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTM</td>
<td>Displacement Tracking Matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFMD</td>
<td>Global Forum on Migration and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMDAC</td>
<td>Global Migration Data Analysis Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMS</td>
<td>Greater Mekong Subregion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCOF</td>
<td>Migration Crisis Operational Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiGOF</td>
<td>Migration Governance Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGI</td>
<td>Migration Governance Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PICT</td>
<td>Pacific Island Countries and Territories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIF</td>
<td>Pacific Islands Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCP</td>
<td>Regional Consultative Processes on Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROAP</td>
<td>Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAARC</td>
<td>South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN ESCAP</td>
<td>UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. Migration Governance Framework and Sustainable Development Goals

1. **ADHERENCE**
   to international standards and the fulfillment of migrants’ rights.

2. **EVIDENCE**
   and whole of government approaches to migration governance.

3. **STRONG**
   partnerships to support migration governance.

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1. **Socioeconomic**
   well-being

2. **Effective**
   responses to the mobility dimensions of crises.

3. **Safe**
   orderly and dignified pathways to migration.
### MiGoF Objectives and Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MiGoF Objectives and Principles</th>
<th>Regional Outcomes</th>
<th>Pacific</th>
<th>East Asia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MiGoF Objective 1: Good migration governance and related policy should seek to advance the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society</td>
<td>Strengthened systems and tailored solutions that harness the benefits of migration are available</td>
<td>Migrants and communities in the Pacific benefit from migration as a sustainable development and climate change adaptation strategy</td>
<td>Effective migration management responses to meet various migration challenges are in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiGoF Objective 2: Good migration governance is based on effective responses to the mobility dimensions of crises</td>
<td>Health vulnerability among migrants and migration-affected communities is reduced</td>
<td>Displaced persons and affected communities in the Pacific are protected from and resilient to the impact of natural disasters</td>
<td>Migration governance is promoted and strengthened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiGoF Objective 3: Migration should take place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner</td>
<td>Capacity to manage migration crises is strengthened</td>
<td>Migrants and affected communities’ resilience to natural disasters and adaptation to climate change is strengthened</td>
<td>Partnership for regional and global engagement, including public private partnership on mobility and development is enhanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle 1: Adherence to international standards and the fulfilment of migrants’ rights</td>
<td>Protection of and assistance to migrants in need is enhanced</td>
<td>Policies and programmes are based on evidence and systematic monitoring and analysis of migration dynamics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle 2: Migration and related policies are best formulated using evidence and whole-of-government approaches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Principle 3: Good migration governance relies on strong partnerships</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Pacific Strategic Priorities
- Migrants and communities in the Pacific benefit from migration as a sustainable development and climate change adaptation strategy
- Displaced persons and affected communities in the Pacific are protected from and resilient to the impact of natural disasters
- Migrants in the Pacific enjoy protection from human rights abuses and are able to migrate in a safe, orderly and dignified manner

### East Asia
- Effective migration management responses to meet various migration challenges are in place

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### Regional Outcomes
- Strengthened systems and tailored solutions that harness the benefits of migration are available
- Health vulnerability among migrants and migration-affected communities is reduced
- Capacity to manage migration crises is strengthened
- Migrants and affected communities’ resilience to natural disasters and adaptation to climate change is strengthened
- Protection of and assistance to migrants in need is enhanced
- Policies and programmes are based on evidence and systematic monitoring and analysis of migration dynamics
- Partnerships and dialogues in the region to address migration challenges and opportunities are enhanced.

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### East Asia
- Effective migration management responses to meet various migration challenges are in place
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOUTHEAST ASIA</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Safe, regular and healthy labour mobility through increased protection of migrant workers in ensured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity to prepare for and respond to natural and human-made disasters is strengthened at national, sub-national and community levels, contributing to increased resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies are developed and capacities enhanced to address the causes of large irregular movements and to provide appropriate humanitarian and health responses to such movements</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partnerships and dialogues to mainstream migration in national initiatives are in place and enhanced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH ASIA</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Regional and national capacities and partnerships on ethical recruitment, skills development and migrant health are strengthened</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children play in the sunset on one of the atolls at the Carteret Islands, Papua New Guinea.

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