

Asia and the Pacific consists of the world's largest landmass and is home to over 4.3 billion people. The region comprises small island states in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean and archipelagos such as Indonesia and the Philippines; landlocked or arid countries like Mongolia and Iran; mountainous countries spanning the Hindukush-Himalayan ranges such as Nepal and Bhutan; and large river basins and deltas of the Yangtze, Mekong, Brahmaputra covering China, India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

As a function of its size, population and topographical diversity, the region is highly exposed to climate change and natural hazards. Frequently occurring sudden-onset disasters linked to climate change such as floods and storms, while slow-onset disasters including sea-level rise, coastal erosion, ocean acidification and droughts have significant impacts on national GDP as countries incur significant losses and fatalities, particularly when the disasters are at their most intense. The effect on human mobility is also significant. Between 2008-2016, more than 186 million people¹ were displaced by sudden-onset disasters in Asia and the Pacific— accounting for 82% of all disaster displacement in the world. Although difficult to enumerate, slow-onset disasters accelerated by climate change combine with other economic, social and political drivers of human mobility. This results in environmental migration which may occur either pre-emptively or in response to progressively deteriorating environmental conditions, within national or across national borders.

To deal with the challenges of environmental migration, IOM in Asia and the Pacific works to assess the evidence of the migration, environment and climate change nexus and to support policymakers with data and information to develop and integrate mobility into relevant climate change policy frameworks. This is closely linked to IOM's work at the community level on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

IOM has 3 central objectives in managing environmental migration:

- To prevent forced migration resulting from environmental factors to the extent possible;
- To provide assistance and protection to affected populations where forced migration does occur, and to seek durable solutions to their situation;
- To facilitate migration as a climate change adaptation strategy.



A family drives to an urban centre in Mongolia with their yurt in tow to escape the harsh winter. Photo: IOM Mongolia

For more information on the above activities please contact the IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC) division at robkmeccroap@iom.int

¹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 2018



SELECTED EXAMPLES OF IOM ACTIVITIES IN ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Climate Change and Disaster Related Migration in Mongolia

This project aims to support the government of Mongolia and other actors to plan proactively and in a coordinated manner for future disaster and climate change forced migration. The project will also support vulnerable migrants in the Ger districts of Ulaanbaatar to make better informed decisions about safe migration, registration and access to services.

Assessing Vulnerabilities and Responses to Environmental Changes in Cambodia

The project documented the livelihood dynamics, migration patterns and drivers observed among Cambodia's rural communities and their responses to environmental changes.

Assessing the Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Migration Nexus in South Asia

Through this project, IOM contributed to national and regional policies which address the expected impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on migration and displacement, which will serve as lessons for the whole region.

Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy (MECLEP)

The project aimed to contribute to the global knowledge base on the relationship between migration and environmental change. More specifically, it aimed to formulate policy options on how migration, including planned relocation, can serve as an adaptation strategy to climate change.

Development of a National Framework for Durable Solutions in Vanuatu

IOM provided technical support for the development of the National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement. This policy aims to mainstream displacement related domains, such as land use, health, education, into national development planning, to better manage the disaster-affected populations in Vanuatu.



A woman in a flood-affected region in Southern Bangladesh brews tea on a make-shift raft