

**ELEVENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Secretariat
New York, 21-22 February 2013

**ASIA-PACIFIC PREPARATIONS FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH-LEVEL
DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT, 2013¹**

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

¹ The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

Asia-Pacific Preparations for the General Assembly High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, 2013

A. OVERVIEW

The second General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, to be held in October 2013, presents the international community with a critical opportunity to address these gaps through cooperation and coordination at the local, national, regional and global levels, while keeping migrants at the centre of the debate.

The High-level Dialogue is being held at a time when international migration continues to grow in scope, complexity and impact, and is assuming increasing significance for the Asia and the Pacific, host to one fourth of the world's international migrants and the leading remittance-receiving region in the world. Enhancing the benefits of international migration to development, as well as reducing its negative impacts, has been a specific goal for most governments in the region. Collaboration and greater consensus on maximizing the benefits of international migration is however yet to be fully consolidated at the sub-regional and regional level despite common challenges and the benefits of partnership and collaboration. At the same time, effective migration governance at the national and local level also remain challenging for many countries in the region.

Cooperation at the regional level is essential to minimize the negative impacts of international migration and to systematically reap its benefits. To this end, the countries in the Asia-Pacific region need to tackle a range of challenges, such as *inter alia* those presented by irregular migration, labour exploitation and human trafficking; to support the effective integration of migrants and their families through a gender-responsive rights-based framework, including access to labour and social protection, and to education and health services; to regulate and monitor the labour migration process in its entirety from recruitment to job placement and return to the home country; to ensure refugee and returnee protection and integration; to enhance the development impact of remittances at all levels; to leverage diaspora contributions for development; and to mainstream migration policies into sustainable development strategies.

Emerging issues such as enhancing the skills and employability of migrant workers, migration consequences of complex crises and emerging protection challenges, the social impacts of migration, especially on women and families, return of qualified migrants, addressing the needs of stateless migrants, and student mobility also need to be discussed for better informed policy response and interventions on effective migration management.

There is value in building partnerships in the region to supplement global policies and agreements to address these issues. In this context, the 2013 HLD and its preparatory processes present an opportunity for the countries of the Asia-Pacific to engage in a policy discourse and put forward a strong outcome document representing consensus on a set of practical recommendations and solutions addressing the key migration issues and priorities confronting the region, for an effective and collaborative framework on international migration and development governance for the region.

General Assembly resolution A/RES/67/219 invites “the regional commissions and their subregional offices, in collaboration with other relevant entities of the United Nations system, as well as the International Organization for Migration and the Council of the International Organization for Migration, to organize discussions to examine regional aspects of international migration and development and to provide inputs, in accordance with their respective mandates, to the preparatory process of the high-level dialogue”.

B. ASIA-PACIFIC PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2013 HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE

1. Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the High-level Dialogue

In fulfilment of the mandate provided by the General Assembly, the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development 2013 will take place at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand from 29 to 31 May 2013. It will be organized by the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) Thematic Working Group on International Migration including Human Trafficking (TWG-Migration), comprised of 15 United Nations entities and affiliated organizations². The Regional Preparatory Meeting is expected to bring together representatives of member governments, international and regional organizations, experts, academia, and civil society organizations from the Asia-Pacific region involved in the formulation and/or implementation of policies related to international migration and development.

a. Objectives and format of meeting

The objective of the Regional Preparatory Meeting is to provide a forum to identify key migration issues, challenges and priorities for the Asia-Pacific region and to arrive at a consensus on a practical set of recommendations that benefit countries in the region as well as migrants.

The Regional Preparatory Meeting will consist of a general debate and four interactive thematic roundtable sessions. The general debate will focus on the review of migration and development policies and programmes, and their impact on economic and social development, identifying relevant priorities in view of the preparation of the post-2015 development framework. The roundtable discussions will be based on the following themes: (i) Ensuring respect and protection of the rights of all migrants and promoting legal and orderly labour migration; (ii) Addressing the gender dimensions of international migration and its impact on women, children and families; (iii) Assessing the effects of international migration on sustainable development; and (iv) Promoting regional cooperation and institutional coherence and partnerships in addressing international migration.

²The Asia-Pacific RCM Thematic Working Group on International Migration including Human Trafficking comprises ILO, IOM, OCHA, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNIAP, UNICEF, UN WOMEN, UNODC, UNDP, WHO and the World Bank. The TWG is co-chaired by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The roundtable discussions will feature expert presentations, followed by interactive discussions. These will be co-led by member governments and supported by TWG-Migration members.

b. Expected outcomes

The Regional Preparatory Meeting is expected to adopt an outcome document and final report which will provide a summary of the key issues and recommendations from the thematic roundtables, to be transmitted as the Asia-Pacific input into the 2013 HLD.

2. Other activities contributing to the Asia-Pacific preparations for the 2013 High-Level Dialogue

a. The Situation Report on International Migration in South and South-West Asia

The Situation Report on International Migration in South and South-West Asia was launched through an interactive seminar with Government officials, academia and civil society on 5 April 2012 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The report focuses on the political, social and cultural dynamics that shape migration patterns in the sub-region through both country overviews and thematic chapters, and contains the migration situation of 10 countries in the region³. The thematic section provides an analysis of regional migration trends and issues including: environment and climate change, gender, health, labour migration, policy and international cooperation, protection of the rights of migrant workers, refugees and stateless persons, and remittances. The report has been written by practitioners and experts drawn from academia, civil society and participating United Nations and international organizations in cooperation with relevant ministries and departments of the member governments in the subregion.

Participants of the launch, including Government representatives, recommended targeting the Member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) for action on the recommendations of the report. Accordingly, a coherent sub-regional policy strategy on international migration in South and South-West Asia was formulated based on the recommendations of the report and transmitted to the Secretary General and the Member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The key recommendations of the report are also expected to inform discussions at the Regional Preparatory Meeting.

b. International migration at the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference (2013)

The Sixth APPC will be held from 16-20 September 2013. International migration will be one of the key issues addressed at the Conference. The APPC will serve as the intergovernmental forum for the regional review of the ICPD Programme of Action, which contains a chapter on international migration. Therefore, the preparatory process for the Sixth APPC is also expected to provide substantive inputs for the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting leading up to the HLD.

³Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Turkey