**UNITED NATIONS EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**
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**KEY TRENDS AND CHALLENGES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

SUMMARY

International migration has become a structural element of societies and economies in Asia and the Pacific. In 2005, the region was home to over 30 per cent of the world's estimated 191 million international migrants. Remittances sent in 2007 to countries in the ESCAP region exceeded $121 billion, improving the quality of life of millions of poor households and sustaining national economies, financing the balance of payments and increasing foreign exchange receipts. While the benefits of international migration are apparent, its costs remain an area of great concern. The consequences of brain drain, the impact of migration on family members left behind and gender roles remain significant challenges requiring the attention of policymakers. The protection of migrants is particularly challenging and the issue remains on the fringes of migration discussions.

Calls for cooperation to manage international migration have increased in recent years. The international community is intensifying its efforts to address international migration issues from development perspectives. The latest endeavour in this respect is the second meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which is scheduled to be held in the Philippines from 27 to 30 October 2008. The forum will deliberate on the multidimensional aspects of migration, including its linkages with development and human rights. It is also expected to address policy, institutional coherence and partnerships for the effective management of international migration.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.   International migration has become an integral and inevitable feature of globalization. In Asia and the Pacific, it has become a structural and permanent element of societies and economies. The movement of people across borders in search of better economic opportunities or safety is a long-standing characteristic of societies in the region. However, more countries are now significantly affected by international migration than at any time in history. International migration is being propelled in the region by various push and pull factors, including persistent intercountry disparities in development, increased integration of the regional economy and divergent demographic dynamics. Labour market transformations, technological progress and economic interlinkages are creating new demands for both skilled and less skilled migrant labour. In addition, international migration is influenced by Government policy, existing migration networks and private agencies which recruit migrant workers.

2.   Increasingly, international migration is appearing at the forefront of the policy discourse on managing globalization. There is a growing recognition of the linkages between international migration and development. Because its impacts are multidisciplinary and transnational in nature, addressing the challenges of international migration will require a high degree of cooperation and coordination at the national, regional and international levels. The international community, through the United Nations system, has been engaged in finding solutions to the pressures of migration with a view to maximizing its benefits while minimizing its negative consequences. The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which was held in New York on 14 and 15 September 2006, deliberated on international migration within the broader context of the achievement of internationally agreed economic and social development goals and respect for all human rights. The historic meeting broadly agreed that international migration, if supported by the right set of policies, could be a positive force for development in both countries of origin and destination (see A/61/515, para. 7).

3.   The latest endeavour by the international community on the issue of international migration is the second meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which is scheduled to be held in the Philippines from 27 to 30 October 2008. Strongly supported by Governments participating in the High-level Dialogue, the forum was established as a standing informal consultative body that is open to all States Members of the United Nations. Its first meeting was held in Belgium in July 2007. The forthcoming meeting is expected to deliberate on the multidimensional aspects of migration, including the linkages between migration, development and human rights and both policy coherence and partnerships for the effective management of international migration.

II. KEY FEATURES OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

A. Trends and patterns of international migration

4.   The trends and patterns of contemporary international migration systems in Asia and the Pacific show a marked complexity. The number of international migrants in Asia nearly doubled between 1960 and 2005, growing from an estimated 28 million in 1960 to more than 53 million in 2005.[1] In the Pacific, the number increased from 2 million to 5 million over the same period. Relative to the total population, international migrants constituted 15 per cent in the Pacific. In contrast, international migrants accounted for less than 2 per cent of the total population in Asia. The Asian and Pacific region currently hosts over 30 per cent of the world's estimated 191 million international migrants. A growing number of countries in the region are participating in the migration process as either sending, transit or receiving countries.

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[1] *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision* (CD-Rom) (United Nations publication, Sales No. 06.XIII.8), available at http://esa.un.org/migration.

5.   The Asian and Pacific region is a major source of permanent migration to Australia, Canada, Europe, New Zealand and the United States. China, India and the Philippines rank among the top ten sources of immigrants to these settlement countries. Family reunification, labour market needs and humanitarian considerations have allowed large numbers of Asians to qualify for admission. In recent years, there has been a turn towards applying more skills-based criteria in the admission of migrants.

6.   While a large number of migrants from Asia and the Pacific continue to seek long-term or permanent settlement in traditional countries of immigration, the cross-border mobility of people within the region has risen rapidly. Today, a major proportion of Asia-Pacific migration is intraregional and a substantial part of it involves the movement of workers. With few significant exceptions, authorized migration within Asia and the Pacific is primarily intended to fill labour gaps. Migrants are allowed into destination countries to render their labour in specific sectors and are expected to return to their countries of origin upon expiration of their contracts.

7.   Two distinctive labour migration systems have emerged in the region, with the Middle East and the newly industrialized economies of East and South-East Asia serving as hubs of labour migration. Since the early 1970s, the oil-producing countries of Western Asia, such as Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have attracted a large number of migrant workers. Today, the area continues to host hundreds of thousands of migrant workers from South and South-East Asia. Since the 1980s, the newly industrialized economies of East and South-East Asia have also emerged as a hub of temporary labour migration. The hub primarily consists of the economies of Brunei Darussalam; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Malaysia; the Republic of Korea; Singapore; and Taiwan Province of China. The sustained growth of their economies, coupled with a limited additional supply of national workers resulting from low fertility, has increasingly led these economies to seek manpower available from neighbouring low-income and labour-surplus countries. In the past decade, the movement of temporary migrant workers has intensified. Today, a large number of skilled professionals are also participating in these migration streams, adding complexity to labour mobility in the region.

8.   International migration patterns have different characteristics in the various subregions of Asia and the Pacific. In North and Central Asia, population movements between the Russian Federation and other countries of the former Soviet Union have been predominant. These movements are driven by the search for better economic opportunities and by the historical, cultural and family ties across post-Soviet borders. Migration in the region is also facilitated by the virtually visa-free population movement regime adopted by the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Political and social tensions have played a major role in the population movements that have occurred since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. However, since the mid-1990s, migration has mainly been economic in nature. The majority of these migration flows are directed at the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, while other destinations, such as Europe and the Middle East, are also important. The strong demand for foreign labour in the economies of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan has turned these countries into hubs for large-scale regular and irregular migration.

9.   East and South-East Asia have experienced growing labour migration over the past two decades. Disparities in the level of economic development among countries in the subregion, coupled with regional economic interdependence, have stimulated the mobility of labour across borders. Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam have been increasingly involved as suppliers of relatively cheap labour. The Philippines has developed an extensive institutional and legal framework to oversee the migration process; it includes assistance prior to departure and on site and continues through the return and reintegration stages. The package of labour migration policies and programmes in the Philippines combines facilitation, marketing, regulation and migrant worker protection and empowerment. Where formal labour migration schemes do not exist, clandestine labour movements emerge. The long and

porous borders in the region, particularly in the Greater Mekong Subregion, have spurred extensive irregular migration, including human trafficking and smuggling.

10.   In South and South-West Asia, contract labour migration is dominant in comparison with other forms of cross-border population movements. Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka deploy a large number of workers to the oil-producing countries in Western Asia and the soaring economies of East and South-East Asia. Irregular migration is also pervasive in the subregion. Human trafficking is a major and often unreported problem in the subregion. Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal are the main countries of origin for trafficked persons in South Asia.
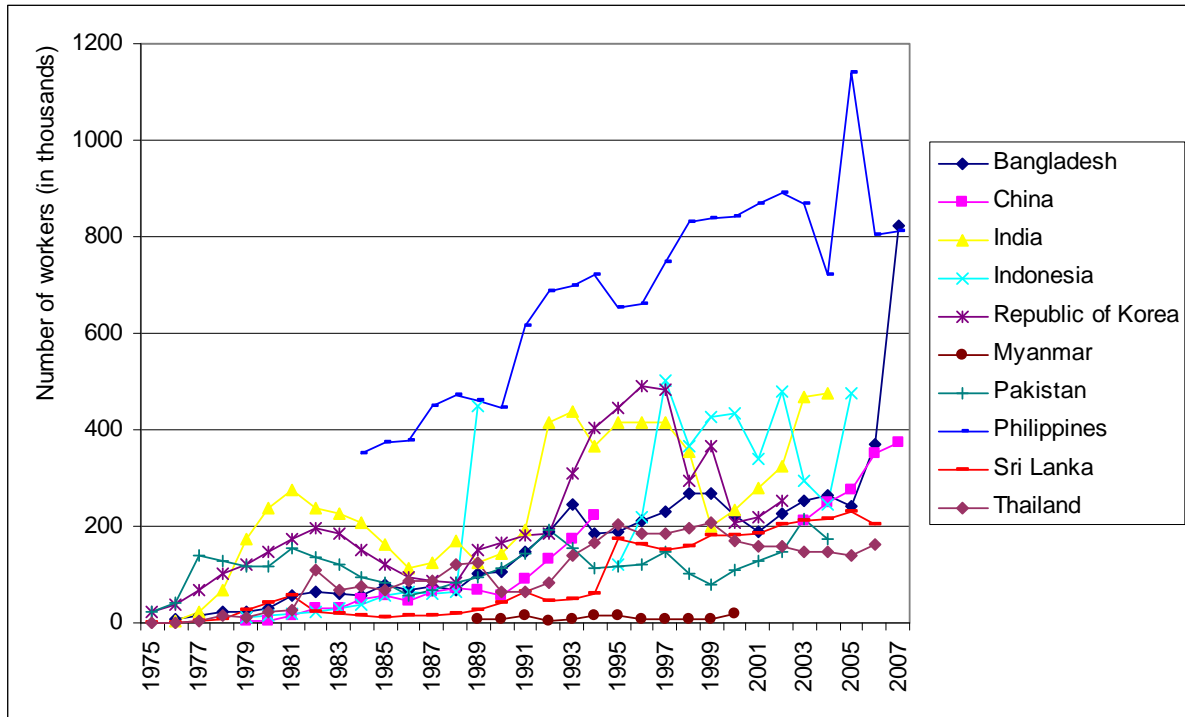
11.   In the Pacific, international migration has been largely intraregional to Australia and New Zealand. The United States is also a major point of attraction. Migration in the subregion is propelled by developmental disparities as well as the special residency and work rights some of the Pacific island countries enjoy in the United States and New Zealand. The citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau have relatively free access to the United States, while those from the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau enjoy residency and work rights in New Zealand, which facilitates the intake of migrants from smaller Pacific nations, including through a seasonal migration scheme introduced in 2007 for temporary low-skilled labour. Many Pacific island countries continue to experience high levels of out-migration, could erode their capacity to undertake social and economic development.

B. Labour migration

12.   A salient feature of international migration in the Asian and Pacific region is the large volume of temporary labour migration. With few exceptions, international migration in the region is primarily intended to fill labour gaps rather than for settlement. Labour migration in Asia involves mostly less skilled workers, with most migrant workers engaged in jobs that are concentrated at the bottom of the employment ladder. A large number of migrant workers are found in agriculture, construction, labour-intensive manufacturing and cleaning services—jobs which are often referred to as 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous and difficult). Certain jobs in destination countries have come to be identified as migrants' jobs. For low-skilled women, domestic work is one of the primary employment opportunities available in the global labour market.

13.   Several countries in the region report large-scale outflows in the form of contractual labour. Over the past few decades, the Philippines has continued to top the list of key source countries of migrant workers. In 2006 alone, the country deployed over 1 million migrant workers, including new hires and rehires composed of land-based and sea-based workers (see figure 1). Annual labour migration from Bangladesh, mainly to the Middle East and Malaysia, more than doubled from 103,000 in 1990 to 252,000 in 2005, while in 2007 it climbed to over 800,000. Labour migration from India to the Middle East averaged about 355,000 per year in the decade between 1993 and 2002. Indonesia sent over 712,000 workers abroad in 2006. Between 2000 and 2006, an annual average of 204,000 labour migrants left Sri Lanka, the majority to destinations in the Middle East. It should be noted that the actual number of migrant workers from the region is likely to be greater because there are unknown flows of workers who move without registering with national authorities.

Figure 1. Labour migration outflow from selected countries in Asia, 1975-2007

Source: ESCAP Database on Asian Labour Migration.

14.   Several labour-surplus countries in Asia are actively involved in promoting labour migration. However, the limited role of Governments in the process of recruitment has led to the widespread commercialization of migrant labour flows. Currently, over 90 per cent of the labour recruitment in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka is carried out by private recruitment agencies.[2] This arrangement has given rise to irregularities and abuses at all stages of the migration process, imposing costs on migrants and their families.

15.   International migration relieves labour shortages in host countries, allowing their economies to expand rather than be constrained. Migrant domestic workers benefit the host economy by freeing female household members to participate in the labour market. Evidence shows that the impact of migration on wages and employment in host countries is mixed and changes with economic conditions. Some findings show that in segmented labour markets, where migrant labour is largely confined to labour-intensive sectors such as construction and manufacturing, the impact on the wages and employment of the local labour force is minimal. However, the availability of migrant workers at low wages has the unintended consequence of retarding the adoption of new technologies and creating incentives for labour-intensive industries to expand the admission of foreign workers. Further research-based information is needed to clarify the various impacts of migration on host countries. It could then be used to serve as the basis for more realistic policies.

16.   While international labour migration in Asia and the Pacific concerns mostly less skilled workers, migration of highly skilled and professional workers has been significant since the 1990s. The number of

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[2] Shahidul Haque, "Migration Trends and Patterns in South Asia and Management Approaches and Initiatives", *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 3, December 2005 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 05.II.F.97).

business professionals, managerial workers, medical and health professionals and information and communications technology (ICT) personnel working outside of their countries of origin is growing within and outside of the region. The two types of skilled workers most in demand are ICT and health professionals. The demand for the former is part of the growing importance of the ICT sector in the global economy, while the demand for the latter is linked to the rising health care needs that often result from population ageing.

17.   Most member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have policies aimed at attracting highly-qualified migrants and international students. According to data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, over 119,000 nurses were deployed abroad between 1992 and 2006, with an average of 8,000 nurses deployed per year. This number is actually an undercount as it refers only to nurses who were issued work permits. India is also a significant source of doctors and nurses in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. Health professionals from India and the Philippines account for the bulk of the immigrant health workforce in OECD countries. Of the immigrant doctors currently working in OECD countries, 15 per cent—or 56,000—are from India.[3] Similarly, 110,000 nurses, representing 15 per cent of all immigrant nurses currently working in OECD countries, come from the Philippines.

C. Feminization of international migration

18.   Feminization is an important feature of labour migration in the region, as an increasing number of women are crossing borders for employment. Female migration has become prominent in terms of both absolute numbers and proportions of the migrant population. For instance, women constitute a large majority of migrant workers leaving Indonesia (79 per cent), the Philippines (72 per cent) and Sri Lanka (64 per cent) (see table 1). Still, a significant part of female migration takes place in an informal and irregular manner. It is known that a large number of women who originate in countries such as Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam migrate clandestinely in search of employment abroad.

19.   Migrant women in the region are engaged in a broad range of economic activities, but predominantly in domestic work and in the health, manufacturing, service and entertainment industries. Demand for female migrant workers has been persistent in relatively affluent economies where local women are drawn into the labour force or where the need to provide care for the elderly is on the rise due to population ageing.

Table 1. Number and percentage of women in labour outflows

		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Indonesia	Number	297255	..	367501	..	334700	324902	..	..
	Percentage	68.3	..	76.5	..	87.5	68.5		
Philippines	Number	178323	186018	208278	175103	209458	205206	184454	146337
	Percentage	23.8	72.0	72.8	72.5	74.3	72.2	59.9	47.8
Sri Lanka	Number	122395	124200	133251	135338	134010	137394	113236	..
	Percentage	40.2	40.3	39.5	39.2	38.4	37.3	35.7	..

Source: Database on Asian migration maintained at ESCAP; Indonesia: IOM, ESCAP et. al. (2008): Situation Report on International Migration in East and South-East Asia, Bangkok.

 [a] The figures for the Philippines refer to newly hired workers for overseas deployment.

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[3] OECD, *International Migration Outlook*, 2007 edition.

D. Irregular migration and human trafficking

20.   Unauthorized migration occurs widely throughout the Asian and Pacific region. Owing to the limited availability of reliable data, estimates of migrants with irregular status are, at best, approximations of the real extent of the phenomenon. Often, only regularization campaigns reveal the extent and scope of irregular migration having taken place in the past. The problem is particularly pervasive in countries such as Thailand and Malaysia which share long and porous borders with neighbouring countries. In 2004, Thailand conducted a nationwide migration registration. The process registered some 1.3 million unauthorized migrants.[4] It is estimated that over 200,000 migrants with irregular status live in Japan and from 300,000 to 500,000 in Malaysia.[5] Large-scale irregular migration is present in North and Central Asia. According to the Russian Ministry of Labour, between 3 and 5 million irregular labour migrants are present in the Russian Federation.[6] It is estimated that between 500,000 and 1 million migrants, mostly from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, are present in Kazakhstan in an irregular situation.

21.   Human trafficking has been a rapidly growing category of transnational crime and a major issue of concern for many Governments in the region. Trafficking is a pernicious form of irregular migration that involves elements of deception, coercion, exploitation, abuse and violence. Though not exclusively, it often targets women and children. The economic vulnerability of trafficking victims is often compounded by physical and psychological abuse, exposure to life threatening conditions including STDs and HIV/AIDS and abuse at the hands of authorities. Women, who make up the majority of trafficking victims, are often targeted for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced marriage and domestic servitude.

III. ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

A. Remittances and development

22.   Remittances made by migrants are one of the most visible outcomes of international migration. They have a profound impact on the quality of life of millions of poor households in developing countries. At the household level, remittances enhance well-being and economic security by providing critical resources for spending on immediate subsistence needs such as food and housing as well as on improved health care and education. Remittances also provide income for investment, savings and entrepreneurial activities which, in turn, have stimulating effects on the local and national economies. In this respect, the contribution of international migration to poverty alleviation and overall socio-economic development has been duly recognized. The volume of remittances to several countries of origin is now so high in absolute terms as well as in relation to other sources of finance that it has become essential to harness its potential to bring about longer-term and broader economic and social development.

23.   The ESCAP region remains one of the largest recipients of recorded remittances. In 2007, remittances sent to countries in the ESCAP region by migrant workers exceeded $121 billion, up from $110 billion in 2006 and more than double the level reached in 2000.[7] This amount reflects only officially recorded transfers—the actual amount, including unrecorded flows through formal and informal channels, is believed to be significantly

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[4] Jerrold Huguet and S. Punpuing, *International Migration in Thailand*, International Organization for Migration Regional Office, Bangkok, 2005.

[5] Maruja M.B. Asis, "Recent Trends in International Migration in Asia and the Pacific", *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*, vol. 20, No. 3, December 2005 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 05.II.F.97).
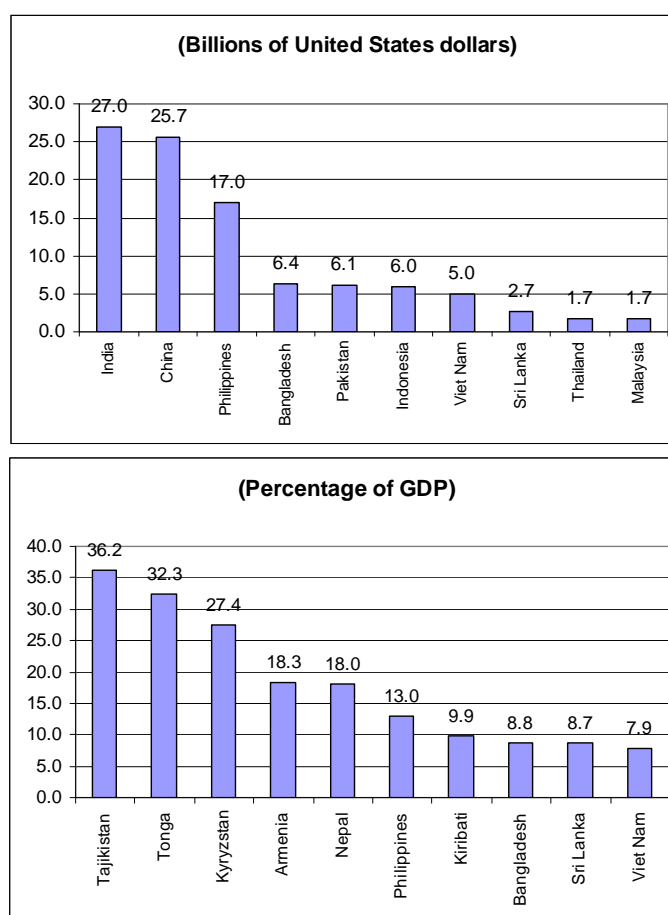
[6] International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), *Overview of the Migration Systems in CIS Countries*, Vienna, 2005.

[7] Dilip Ratha and Zhimei Xu, *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2008, available at www.worldbank.org/prospects/migrationandremittances.

larger. Recorded remittances to developing countries now constitute more than twice the amount from official development assistance and nearly two thirds of foreign direct investment flows.[8]

24. In 2007, of the top 10 remittance-receiving developing countries in the world, three—India, China and the Philippines—were from the ESCAP region. Remittances to these countries accounted for more than half of the receipts in the region. Significant remittances were also recorded in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Viet Nam (see figure 2). As a share of gross domestic product (GDP), remittances were significant in several countries of origin, particularly in smaller economies such as Tajikistan (36 per cent), Tonga (32 per cent), Kyrgyzstan (27 per cent), Armenia (18 per cent) and Nepal (18 per cent). Remittances have become a structural element of the economy in the Asian and Pacific region, sustaining national economies, financing balances of payments and increasing foreign exchange receipts.

Figure 2. Top ten remittance-receiving developing countries in the ESCAP region, 2007

Source: Dilip Ratha and Zhimei Xu, *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008*, World Bank, Washing, D.C., 2008, available at www.worldbank.org/prospects/migrationandremittances.

Note: Remittances refer to workers' remittances and compensation of employees.

    [8] Dilip Ratha, Sanket Mohapatra, K.M. Vijayalakshmi and Zhimei Xu, *Remittance Trends 2007*, World Bank, Migration and Development Brief 3, November 2007, available at www.worldbank.org/prospects/migrationandremittances.

25.   Improving the financial infrastructure underlying remittances is essential to harnessing the developmental impacts of migration. Among the critical issues are enhancing remittances by regularizing informal remittance channels, improving regulatory and institutional frameworks and reducing the money transfer transaction costs. With the advent of cell phone and Internet-based remittance instruments, the remittance industry is experiencing some positive structural changes. Remittance costs have fallen, although not enough. However, the diffusion of these structural changes is slowed down by a lack of clarity on key regulations, including those relating to money laundering and other financial crimes. Migrants face several challenges in accessing formal financial institutions. Stringent identification and documentation requirements to open bank accounts compel migrants to divert a larger share of remittance transfers into informal channels. In order to maximize the benefits of remitting through formal channels, regulations must ease constraints for "unbanked" migrants.

B. Impact of the migration of skilled workers

26.   Brain drain—the loss of human capital through emigration—is often cited as one of the negative consequences of international migration. This is a major policy concern because a shortage of human capital in key sectors such as education, health and technology could depress productivity and economic growth and retard the provision of social services. Whether and to what extent the negative effects of the migration of skilled workers outweigh the beneficial effects is still a subject of debate. Some studies indicate that the migration of highly skilled persons may have redemptive impacts through return migration. Return migrants enhance the transfer of technology, skills, knowledge and capital to their countries of origin. They are often leaders who spread ideas ranging from the family norm to entrepreneurship. Similarly, diaspora communities could be instrumental in creating business networks and increasing trade, investment and access to markets in receiving countries and in playing a critical role by bringing new ideas and ways of doing business to their countries of origin.

27.   Balancing the costs and benefits of the migration of skilled workers poses a difficult challenge to policy formulation. Many Government interventions aimed at reversing the consequences of brain drain have pursued a two-pronged approach: retention and return. Retention and return interventions are difficult to implement successfully because both require addressing the underlying causes of human capital flight and creating attractive opportunities at home, which may be costly and impractical. Other Governments are seeking to enhance diaspora-related contributions to their domestic economy. Principally, they have sought to cultivate ties with their migrant diaspora by liberalizing dual citizenship and by facilitating diaspora investments in and financial linkages with the home country. The focus of such strategies is on mobilizing the diaspora, where the emphasis is on transferring knowledge, skills, technology and investment.

IV. SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

28.   Given the large scale of labour migration in the region, many of the migration debates have been focused on the economic dimensions of the issue, while its social dimensions have received only marginal attention. International migration is, however, more than just flows of labour and remittances. It has social dimensions which can have profound implications for origin, destination and transit countries. Migration impacts the lives of those involved as well as their families and communities.

29.   Temporary labour migration, which is the predominant form of migration within Asia and the Pacific, does not allow migrants to bring their family members to the country of employment. Thus, the separation of families due to migration is a source of great concern, as it could be detrimental to family cohesion, marital stability and the welfare of dependents left behind, particularly children. Family separation as a result of international migration may place those left behind in a vulnerable situation as

dependents confront social and emotional consequences. An extended period of separation may result in marital instability, emotional and psychological stress, juvenile delinquency and abandonment of the elderly. The impact of migration on functions and gender roles within the family requires careful investigation.

A. Gender dimensions of international migration

30. Most of the employment opportunities available to low-skilled women in the global labour market are in the domestic services and manufacturing sectors. The conditions associated with such work have rendered women migrants vulnerable. They are more exposed to forced labour and exploitation than men and they are more likely to accept precarious working conditions and poorly paid work in gender-segregated and unregulated sectors of the economy. Female migrant domestic workers often face social isolation because they are employed in private households. Exploitation and abuse are more likely in isolated and dispersed communities. These problems are compounded for workers who migrate clandestinely, have an unauthorized status and thus are not protected by national laws. The invisible status of domestic migrant workers makes them an inaccessible and hard-to-reach group for service delivery. Gender aspects of migration are not given the attention they deserve. Addressing the special concerns of migrant women calls for policy that aims to reduce and eliminate gender-based discrimination, violence and trafficking and to provide assistance to meet the reproductive health needs of women in vulnerable situations, including emergency and refugee situations.

31. Despite these gender-specific concerns, international migration has the potential to allow women to play increasingly important roles as family providers and agents of development. The opportunity to earn an income and the experience of transcending family boundaries can engender life-changing conditions. When women migrate and become the major income earners for their families, their status can be enhanced; when other family members migrate, the responsibility and decision-making authority of women may increase. Besides economic empowerment, the survival and coping skills developed by women during the migration process is a potential source of change and development. Heightened self-esteem associated with employment, education and knowledge empowers female migrants. Gender equality and empowerment are essential ingredients for achieving many internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, particularly promoting gender equality and empowering women (Goal 3).[9] Migration can contribute to the empowerment of women and hence promote gender equality.

B. International marriages

32. International migration for the purpose of marriage is a growing phenomenon in Asia and the Pacific which is contributing to the increasing international migration of women. Japan, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of international marriages involving foreign women. In Taiwan Province of China, the number of foreign spouses now exceeds the number of migrant workers. International marriage is seen as a solution by some communities confronting depopulation due to low fertility rates and outmigration. In Japan and the Republic of Korea, local governments in some of the affected communities actively participate in the search for overseas brides.

33. The majority of foreign brides come from China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. The entry of for-profit marriage brokers has commoditized the introduction and matching of potential partners, which has often led to abuse, fraudulent marriages and the trafficking of women. Cultural differences and the spouses' different expectations of marriage further contribute to the

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[9] See www.un.org/millenniumgoals.

challenges faced by women and men in international marriages. Stereotypes and discrimination against such migrants—who are often perceived as marrying for monetary gain—further marginalizes their position in society. The situation faced by foreign brides has raised concerns about their safety, their access to support and assistance and their rights, especially when their marriages are troubled or dissolved.

34.   For receiving societies, the integration of foreign spouses and their children into host communities is a challenge. Recently, non-governmental organizations have emerged to provide assistance to families formed through international marriages—especially to foreign women—through language courses, cultural orientation seminars, counselling services and legal assistance. The advocacy work of non-governmental organizations and civil society has contributed to galvanizing support for foreign spouses in distress and to exposing the trafficking elements of international marriages. Policies intended to address the challenges of transnational marriages could include: the regulation of marriage agencies; the establishment of support services, particularly to victims of domestic violence; multilingual services; protection of residency status; access to minimum livelihood protection and employment opportunities; and support for multicultural programmes.

C. Families left behind

35.   Extended periods of separation due to migration have raised many concerns about the stability of the family unit. The long absence of fathers, mothers or both parents poses a number of challenges for the family members left behind in terms of providing care for dependents, redistributing household chores and decision-making responsibilities and fulfilling emotional needs. Research suggests that the extended family often fills the void left by departing migrants and provides continuity in family-based care, especially for children. Access to cheaper and faster communication has significantly bridged the distance between family members. However, marital instability and the consequent break-up of the family unit is often mentioned as one of the consequences of the prolonged absence of migrants from the family.

36.   It is estimated that between 3 and 6 million children have been left behind by Filipino parents working overseas; the equivalent figure for Indonesia is 1 million, while for Thailand it is half a million.[10] The social costs of parental absence for children left behind include poor performance at school, delinquency and psychological problems. The evidence in the Philippines and Sri Lanka suggests that families undergo more adjustments when mothers migrate than when fathers leave. Mothers are likely to embrace the tasks and functions of fathers who migrate. In contrast, when mothers migrate, child care arrangements tend to be designated to other female relatives. However, the irreplaceable role of the mother in the lives of children is often underscored in research assessing the impact of parental absence on the well-being of children left behind.

37.   While there are several probable negative consequences for family members left behind, migration also benefits them in a number of ways. It has been observed that families with migrant members tend to have better housing and a higher rate of ownership of consumer durables than families without migrants. Some families have adopted more modern ways of living and have strengthened their families by making good use of remittances. Hence, the social and emotional costs of migration might be moderated by the material benefits made possible by remittances and the transfer of skills, knowledge and technology.

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[10] John Bryant, 2005, *Children of International Migrants in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines: A Review of Evidence and Policies*, Innocenti Working Paper No. 2005-05, Florence, UNICEF Innocenti Research Center.

D. Migrant children

38. Moving to another country makes migrant children face more challenges than children of migrants left behind. Although they may be with their parents, such children may face serious institutional, social and psychological barriers, especially when their parents occupy marginal positions in the destination country. Such children may have limited access to schooling and public health services. One problem that is faced by all migrants, but that is particularly acute for children, is legal identity. Children who do not have identification documents are usually excluded from formal schooling. It may also be more difficult for them to participate in socializing activities and to create social networks because of language and cultural barriers.

39. Migration places unique stresses on children. They are leaving a familiar social context and an extended family network and entering a new place, culture, and language. The harsh conditions endured before or during the transitional journey also contribute to the stress. Migrant children who do not connect in some meaningful way with their peers, family or school are at an increased risk of school dropout, substance abuse, health problems, suicide and criminal activity. The stress could be even more intense for adolescent migrants.

40. Information on the social impact of migration on migrant children is scant. The provision of services to children of irregular migrants is often politically and economically difficult because of the perception that such benefits may attract new migrants or encourage permanent settlement. Interventions by non-governmental organizations and others could be useful to ensure that entitlements are used. The registration of undocumented migrants and their children may provide them with important advantages, such as an improved chance of avoiding deportation and the opportunity to attend school and receive public health care.

E. Migration and health

41. Migrants are often perceived as vectors of disease. The recent outbreaks of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in East and South-East Asia have demonstrated that human mobility has repercussions on public health. There is a close association between population mobility and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Migrants often become vulnerable to contracting HIV during transit and after they arrive at their destinations. The link between migration and HIV/AIDS emanates from the conditions and structures of the migration process itself, as it may involve exploitation, separation from spouse and family and exposure to changing sociocultural norms that guide behaviour. Migrants may have problems dealing with social and sexual norms in new environments and may not know how to protect themselves against sexual risks.

42. Migrants are likely to have a different level of risk than members of the host community for some illnesses. They may face higher risks due to differences in disease prevalence or due to the psychological and physical stress of moving to a new environment. Because of language, cultural and procedural barriers, migrants have difficulty accessing health-care services or they tend to underutilize services, especially preventive services, such as prenatal care, immunizations and regular health examinations.

43. While both regular and irregular migrants are susceptible to communicable diseases, irregular migrants are more vulnerable. They may be reluctant to seek medical attention for fear of apprehension by authorities. Migrants who have been trafficked and others in exploitative situations may have less access to health-care services. Migrant women, in general, and women trafficked for sexual exploitation, in particular, face specific reproductive health issues, such as unwanted pregnancies, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, as well as mental and emotional disorders.

V. PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS

44.   Respect for the human rights of migrants is one of the most basic determinants of their well-being, which is essential for achieving greater social and economic development. It is important that migrants of all ages are treated equally under the law and have access to affordable basic social services in receiving countries. Although many migrants enjoy positive experiences at their destinations, a significant number face hardships that erode the gains of migration. In particular, less skilled migrant workers are likely to face deception, discrimination, exploitation and abuse at work. Among other things, informal work arrangements often entail disadvantages for migrant workers, including low wages, poor working conditions and a lack of social protection and workers' rights. The fact that labour standards are often not applied and enforced in host countries is one of the major sources of hardship for migrants.

Table 2. Number of countries in the ESCAP region that had ratified key United Nations legal instruments pertaining to international migrants as of 31 December 2008

International instrument	Year adopted	Year of entry into force	Number of countries
Refugees			
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees	1951	1954	24
Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees	1967	1967	24
Labour Migration			
Convention concerning Migration for Employment (Revised 1949) (Convention No.97)	1949	1952	3
Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers (Convention No.143)	1975	1978	3
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families	1990	2003	7
Smuggling and trafficking			
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children	2000	2003	18
Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air	2000	2004	17

 Source: International Labour Organization, ILOLEX database, available at http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/index.htm; United Nations, United Nations Treaty Collection, available at http://untreaty.un.org, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Signatories to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime and its Protocols, http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/signatures.html

45.   International human rights instruments call on States to abide by international human rights principles when designing regulations and policies that affect the welfare of migrants. Some countries in the region have taken significant steps towards providing a level of protection to migrants by ratifying international conventions pertaining to the rights of migrants (see table 2). The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime[11] and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,[12] both adopted in 2000, have been ratified and have entered into force fairly quickly, indicating the strong

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[11] General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex II.
[12] Ibid., annex III.

commitment of States to combat such crimes. However, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families,[13] which entered into force on 1 July 2003, has so far been ratified by only seven States in the ESCAP region. Ratification of this convention has been relatively slow and it is mostly supported by countries of origin.

46.   The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been active in promoting a fair deal for migrant workers since the 1920s. Two ILO conventions concerning migrant workers are the Convention concerning Migration for Employment (Revised 1949) (Convention No. 97) and the Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers (Convention No. 143) of 1975. As of 1 July 2008, Convention No. 97 had been ratified by only four countries while Convention No. 143 had three ratifications. The low ratification record of these international instruments weakens their effectiveness in protecting the rights of migrants. Resistance is even greater when references are made to protecting the rights of unauthorized migrants.

47.   The protection of migrants in Asia and the Pacific is particularly challenging because the issue remains marginal in migration discussions and it is mostly pursued by civil society. Bilateral discussions have been largely confined to regulating the movement of workers rather than promoting the protection of migrant workers. While progress in securing the commitment of States has been relatively slow, the gap has been filled, to some extent, by non-State actors, including migrant associations and international organizations. In addition to conducing advocacy campaigns, these groups also provide a variety of support services to migrant workers and their families.

48.   A central area of concern for policy in source countries of migrant workers is reducing the costs and risks of labour migration. Excessive fees charged and fraud committed by recruiting agents are two of the main challenges to the development of credible and efficient recruitment systems. Attempts to control fees charged for recruitment meet with difficulties because legal ceilings placed by authorities in countries of origin can easily be thwarted. Deduction from migrants' wages is a widespread problem which is difficult to address in the absence of bilateral arrangements. Governments have sought to minimize the problem through licensing and close monitoring of recruitment agents' operations. Reducing the risks and costs of labour migration is one of the areas in which regional cooperation could result in a solution. Bilateral and multilateral discussions in the region could contribute towards a more comprehensive approach and a commitment to the protection of migrants' right.

49.   Despite the severe inadequacy of prevailing migration management regimes, there have been a few significant developments. The 1999 Bangkok Declaration on Irregular Migration (A/C.2/54/2, annex) was a major step forward in regional cooperation. A strong commitment by Governments to combat human trafficking in the region is reflected in initiatives such as the adoption of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution in 2002 and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Joint Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons Particularly Women and Children in November 2004. In the same year, the six countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion, namely Cambodia, China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation against trafficking in persons and established the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) process. The memorandum addresses five key areas of concern: policy and cooperation; legal frameworks, law enforcement and justice; protection, recovery and reintegration; preventive measures; and mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the MOU. It commits the signatory Governments to developing national plans of action against trafficking in persons and to working towards establishing and strengthening national multisectoral

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[13] General Assembly resolution 45/158, annex.

committees to address trafficking.   The COMMIT process is actively developing guidelines and procedures for the protection and support of persons who have been trafficked.

50.   In contrast, the regional process to discuss the conditions of migrant workers has been slower and more contentious. The ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers—signed in January 2007 by the Heads of State at the Twelfth ASEAN Summit in the Philippines—is the closest to a regional instrument that has been produced. The ASEAN leaders tasked the secretary-general of ASEAN to submit an annual report on the progress of implementation of their Declaration. Subsequently, the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the Cebu Declaration was established in July 2007. One important task of the committee is to develop an ASEAN legal instrument for the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers.

VI. KEY AREAS FOR ACTION AND COOPERATION

51.   Due to the growing impact of international migration, policy development in this area is receiving greater attention. The growing recognition of the interlinkages between migration and development and the involvement of a greater number of actors are shaping policy developments. Addressing the challenges of international migration requires a high degree of coordination nationally, regionally and internationally. It requires an understanding and awareness of the social and economic implications of migration and the political will to manage migration flows and to address their consequences. To determine sustainable policy options, policymakers must weigh economic efficiencies and implications for local wages, human rights and other cross-cutting social issues. Given the multifaceted nature of the migration process, policy design and intervention need to address several dimensions. The following are selected principal areas of concern for international migration policy which have a significant impact on migrants, their families, society and the economy:

        (a)   *Integrating migration into the broader development context.* Understanding the important relationship between migration, poverty and development is critical to addressing the challenges of international migration and maximizing its benefits for both sending and receiving countries. Migration policy, particularly for labour migration, is not only a deployment or recruitment issue. Both destination and origin countries must be circumspect about the consequences of migration policies, particularly with regard to how they may affect the welfare of migrants, national development objectives and the local economy. Unless migration management policies are coherent with and integrated into the socio-economic development agenda, including poverty reduction strategies, the potential benefits from international migration may not be fully realized. Migration policies should not be designed as a short-term measure or independently from national development goals.

        (b)   *Ensuring policy coherence.* Because of its multidisciplinary nature, international migration poses a challenge for policy coherence. At the national level, Governments should aim to achieve coherent migration policies by ensuring that they are internally consistent and designed to realize their objectives, which means that economic incentives must be structured to achieve the desired outcome, taking into account the competing interests of employers, private labour recruiters, trade unions, human rights advocates and non-governmental organizations representing migrant groups.

        (c)   *Protecting international migrants.* The importance of ensuring the rights and welfare of migrant workers has been recognized. However, there are few bilateral agreements between sending and receiving countries that provide full protection for the rights of migrant workers. The issue is often contentious. To sustain efforts to promote a rights-based perspective in the approach to migration requires the cooperation of Governments and non-State actors. Three critical areas for policy action on the protection of international migrants are:

(i) *Ratification of international human rights instruments.* A significant step towards protecting the rights of migrants is for countries to ratify international human rights instruments, particularly those pertaining to the rights of migrants. Governments that have not yet done so should be encouraged to sign and ratify key international agreements relating to the rights of migrants.

(ii) *Regulation of recruitment agents.* A major proportion of migrant labour recruitment is carried out by private recruitment agencies, which has given rise to irregularities, fraud, abuses and excessive fees. In order to protect migrants, there is a need to develop credible and efficient recruitment systems through licensing and close monitoring of recruitment agents' operations.

(iii) *Anti-trafficking measures.* Human trafficking has become entrenched in the ESCAP region and requires effective counter-trafficking policies and programmes which address critical aspects in areas of both origin and destination. Measures should include the criminalization of trafficking and the effective use of the justice system as well as the extension of assistance to victims, including services for their rehabilitation. Policies must be designed with the ultimate intention of reducing exploitation and protecting migrants, irrespective of whether the migrant is legal or undocumented.

(d) *Leveraging remittances for development.* Maximizing the developmental impacts of remittances is a growing policy concern. It is a major policy issue because of the high transaction costs charged by money transfer agents. When transaction costs are high, migrants resort to informal channels. Calls to harness the positive developmental impacts of international migration emphasize improving the financial infrastructure underlying remittances and improving the speed, flexibility, cost-effectiveness and accessibility of formal systems in order to make them attractive to migrants and their households. Other measures to facilitate remitting through formal channels include adopting innovative linkages between information technology and financial transfer systems to reduce the cost of remittance flows and ensuring that departing workers are given the opportunity to open a bank account of their choice, including access to low-cost pre-departure loans as a way of encouraging migrants to use formal banking channels. An important objective of leveraging remittances is to stimulate investments. Policy action to leverage remittances could involve, at the individual level, allowing income from remittances to be considered as collateral to obtain credit for small-scale investment purposes and, at the community level, matching remittance transfers with public funds for viable large development projects.

(e) *Addressing knowledge and policy gaps through research and data collection.* In order to develop sound migration management policies, there is a need for more policy-relevant research on the beneficial and adverse impacts of migration in diverse areas of concern. Such research is crucial in order to inform decision-making. Several questions arising from the growing concerns about international migration have few clear answers due to a lack of up-to-date and accurate information. Documenting levels, trends and policy practices remains a major challenge. There is an urgent need for comprehensive, accurate and timely migration information to provide a solid basis for the formulation and implementation of international migration policies and programmes. Governments, in collaboration with international organizations and academic institutions, should carry out policy-relevant research on international migration. Such research should examine the complex relationship between migration and development as well as the costs and benefits of migration.

(f) *Promoting dialogue and advocacy.* Calls for regional cooperation to manage international migration have increased. To maximize the benefits of migration for development, constructive dialogue needs to occur among origin, transit and destination countries with the aim of arriving at a framework for cooperation at the bilateral and regional levels. With this objective in mind,

countries need to enhance their understanding of migration issues through dialogue and the exchange of information, experiences and practices. In this regard, the emergence of various multilateral forums (such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development) and regional consultative processes (such as the Manila, Bali and Colombo processes) on migration issues has fostered discussion on the multidimensional aspects of international migration, including its nexus with development and related cross-cutting issues. Regular dialogue is critical to harmonizing approaches and responses to the challenges and opportunities of international migration as well as to achieving policy coherence at the national, regional and international levels.

Table 1: Key demographic and economic indicators for Asia-Pacific countries

Country/region	Fertility rate, total (births per woman) (2006)	International migration stock (% of population) (2005)	International migration stock, total (tsd) (2005)	Net migration (tsd) (2005)	Population, total (millions) (2007)	GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$), (2007)	Workers' remittances received (% of GDP) (2007)	Workers' remittances a received (in million US$) (2007)
East and North-East Asia								
China	1.8	0.0	595.7	-1,900.0	1,319.98	2360	0.8	25,703.0
Hongkong, China	1.0	44.0	2,998.7	300.0	6.93	31610	0.2	347.6
Japan	1.3	1.6	2,048.5	270.0	127.77	37670	0.0	1,577.4
Korea, Dem. Rep.	1.9	0.2	36.8	0.0	23.78	..	..	..
Korea, Rep.	1.1	1.1	551.2	-80.0	48.53	19690	0.1	1,127.7
Macao, China	0.9	54.4	257.3	25.0	0.48	..	..	511.5
Mongolia	2.3	0.4	9.1	-50.0	2.61	1290	5.0	194.0
North and Central Asia								
Armenia	1.3	7.8	235.2	-100.0	3.00	2640	13.9	1,273.0
Azerbaijan	2.3	2.2	181.8	-100.0	8.57	2550	4.1	1,287.3
Georgia	1.4	4.3	191.2	-248.0	4.40	2120	6.9	705.1
Kazakhstan	2.1	16.5	2,501.8	-200.0	15.48	5060	0.2	223.0
Kyrgyz Republic	2.4	5.6	287.8	-75.0	5.24	590	20.4	714.8
Russian Federation	1.3	8.4	12,079.6	916.7	141.64	7560	0.3	4,100.4
Tajikistan	3.4	4.7	306.4	-345.0	6.74	460	33.7	1,250.0
Turkmenistan	2.6	4.6	223.7	-10.0	4.96	..	..	..
Uzbekistan	2.4	4.8	1,267.8	-300.0	26.87	730	..	..
Pacific								
American Samoa	..	35.0	20.4	..	0.06	..	..	..
Australia	1.8	20.1	4,097.2	592.9	21.02	35960	0.5	3,861.6
Fiji	2.8	2.1	17.2	-42.0	0.84	3800	4.8	165.5
French Polynesia	2.3	13.1	33.6	1.8	0.26	..	..	600.7
Guam	2.6	67.3	113.4	0.8	0.17	..	..	..
Kiribati	..	2.6	2.6	..	0.10	1170	8.1	7.0
Marshall Islands	..	2.6	1.7	..	0.07	3070	..	..
Micronesia, Federated States of	3.8	3.2	3.6	-9.7	0.11	2470	..	..
New Caledonia	2.3	18.4	43.2	4.8	0.24	..	..	535.1
New Zealand	2.1	15.5	642.2	101.8	4.23	28780	0.5	649.5
Northern Mariana Islands	..	6.5	5.2	..	0.08	..	..	..
Palau	..	15.1	3.0	..	0.02	8210	..	..
Papua New Guinea	3.9	0.4	25.4	0.0	6.32	850	0.2	13.3

Country/region	Fertility rate, total (births per woman) (2006)	International migration stock (% of population) (2005)	International migration stock, total (tsd) (2005)	Net migration (tsd) (2005)	Population, total (millions) (2007)	GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US$), (2007)	Workers' remittances received (% of GDP) (2007)	Workers' remittances a received (in million US$) (2007)
Samoa	4.0	5.0	9.2	-15.0	0.19	2430	0.2	0.8
Solomon Islands	4.0	0.7	3.3	0.0	0.50	730	5.5	20.4
Tonga	3.8	1.2	1.2	-7.9	0.10	2320	33.3	77.0
Vanuatu	3.8	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.23	1840	2.5	11.3
South-East Asia								
Brunei Darussalam	2.3	33.2	124.2	3.5	0.39	..	..	..
Cambodia	3.3	2.2	303.9	10.0	14.45	540	4.1	352.6
Indonesia	2.2	0.1	159.7	-1,000.0	225.63	1650	1.4	6,142.8
Lao PDR	3.3	0.4	24.6	-115.0	5.86	580	0.0	1.0
Malaysia	2.7	6.4	1,639.1	150.0	26.55	6540	0.9	1,700.0
Myanmar	2.1	0.2	117.4	-99.0	48.78	..	..	125.0
Philippines	3.3	0.4	374.5	-900.0	87.89	1620	11.7	16,859.5
Singapore	1.3	43.2	1,843.0	200.0	4.59	32470	..	..
Thailand	1.8	1.7	1,050.5	231.3	63.83	3400	0.7	1,635.0
Timor-Leste	7.3	0.6	6.1	100.0	1.07	1510	..	..
Vietnam	2.1	0.0	21.1	-200.0	85.14	790	7.7	5,500.0
South and South-West Asia								
Afghanistan	..	0.2	43.2	1,111.9	..	..	..	..
Bangladesh	2.9	0.7	1,031.9	-500.0	158.57	470	9.7	6,560.0
Bhutan	2.3	1.5	9.8	35.0	0.66	1770	..	..
India	2.5	0.5	5,700.1	-1,350.0	1,123.32	950	2.3	2,700.0
Maldives	2.7	1.1	3.4	0.0	0.31	3200	0.2	2.3
Nepal	3.1	3.0	818.6	-100.0	28.11	340	17.0	1,733.9
Pakistan	3.9	2.1	3,254.1	-1,239.4	162.39	870	4.2	5,998.0
Sri Lanka	1.9	1.9	368.2	-441.8	19.94	1540	8.3	2,700.0
Turkey	2.2	1.8	1,328.4	-30.0	73.89	8020	0.2	1,200.0

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators 2008

Table 2: Countries having ratified key international instruments regarding international migration

Title	Year adopted	Year of entry into force	ESCAP member states ratified (year)	ESCAP member states signed but not ratified
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees	1951	1954	Afghanistan (2005), Armenia (1993), Australia (1954), Azerbaijan (1993), Cambodia (1992), China (1982), Fiji (1972), Georgia (1999), Iran (Islamic of) (1976), Japan (1981), Kazakhstan (1999), Kyrgyzstan (1996), New Zealand (1960), Papua New Guinea (1986), Philippines (1981), Republic of Korea (1992), Russian Federation (1993), Samoa (1988), Solomon Islands (1995), Tajikistan (1993), Timor-Leste (2003), Turkey (1962), Turkmenistan (1998), Tuvalu (1986)	
Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees	1967	1967	Afghanistan (2005), Armenia (1993), Australia (1973), Azerbaijan (1993), Cambodia (1992), China (1982), Fiji (1972), Georgia (1999), Iran (Islamic of) (1976), Japan (1981), Kazakhstan (1999), Kyrgyzstan (1996), New Zealand 91960), Papua New Guinea (1986), Philippines (1981), Republic of Korea (1992), Russian Federation (1993), Samoa (1994), Solomon Islands (1995), Tajikistan (1993), Timor-Leste (2003), Turkey (1968), Turkmenistan (1998), Tuvalu (1986)	
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families	1990	2003	Azerbaijan (1999), Kyrgyzstan (2003), Philippines (1995), Sri Lanka (1996), Tajikistan (2002), Timor-Leste (2004), Turkey (2004)	Bangladesh (1998), Cambodia (2004), Indonesia (2004)
Convention concerning migration for employment (revised 1949) (No. 97)	1949	1952	Armenia (2007), New Zealand (1952), Tajikistan (2008)	
Convention concerning Migration in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and treatment of Migrant Workers (Convention No. 143)	1975	1978	Armenia (2006), Philippines (2006), Tajikistan (2007)	

Title	Year adopted	Year of entry into force	ESCAP member states ratified (year)	ESCAP member states signed but not ratified
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children	2000	2003	Armenia (2003), Australia (2005), Azerbaijan (2003), Cambodia (2007), Georgia (2006), Kazakhstan (2008), Kiribati (2005), Kyrgyzstan (2003), Lao PDR (2003), Mongolia (2008), Myanmar (2004), New Zealand (2002), Philippines (2002), Russian Federation (2004), Tajikistan (2002), Turkey (2003), Turkmenistan (2005), Uzbekistan (2008)	India (2002), Indonesia (2000), Japan (2002), Republic of Korea (2000), Thailand (2001)
Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air	2000	2004	Armenia (2003), Australia (2004), Azerbaijan (2003), Cambodia (2005), Georgia (2006), Kazakhstan (2008), Kiribati (2005), Kyrgyzstan (2003), Lao PDR (2003), Mongolia (2008), Myanmar (2004), New Zealand (2002), Philippines (2002), Russian Federation (2004), Tajikistan (2002), Turkey (2003), Turkmenistan (2005)	India (2002), Indonesia (2000), Japan (2002), Nauru (2001), Republic of Korea (2000), Thailand (2001), Uzbekistan (2001)