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# Addressing Migration Challenges in Asia: Policy Approaches and Regional Consultative Processes

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**A presentation for the International Symposium on International Migration and Development, Torino, 20-30 June 2006 by Irena Vojackova-Sollorano, Regional Representative for Southeast Asia based at IOM Bangkok**

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# Outline



- Key trends and policy issues
  - Trends in policy development
    - Unilateral trends
    - Bilateral agreements
    - Multilateral consultations through Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs)
  - The Role of RCPs
  - RCPs active in Asia
  - Gaps in policy development
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# Key Trends and Policy Issues



- The key issues in the Asia and Pacific region are:
    - ❑ Increasing regular and irregular migration, skilled and unskilled
    - ❑ The rights and obligations of migrants and States
    - ❑ Increasing attention to remittance flows
    - ❑ The feminization of migration
    - ❑ Sub-regional challenges
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# Key Trend and Policy Issues



- ❑ Migration policies address only specific issues
- ❑ Lack of appropriate migration channels despite demand for migrant workers in receiving countries – migration is structurally necessary to many of the growing economies in Asia
- ❑ Existing legislation does not address challenges of migration flows
- ❑ Memoranda of Understanding address only labour migration
- ❑ Challenges result from competing interests of: sending countries and receiving countries; labour market needs and national security issues
- ❑ Common ground among sending and receiving countries remains limited

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# Policies of Sending Countries



- The trend among sending countries has been to focus on the protection of their own migrants in an effort to reduce exploitation during the recruitment process and maximize the benefits of sending workers abroad
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# The Policies of Receiving Countries



- The trend among receiving countries has been to focus on flexible and time limited labour migration that address labour market gaps and industrial needs



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# Bi-Lateral Agreements



- Focus on temporary labour migration, the status of migrants, rights and obligations with respect to health and social services in the destination country
  - Negotiation and implementation of agreements promotes dialogue between countries on migration issues
  - Driven by labour market demand
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# Regional Consultative Process



- Regional consultative processes are non-binding multi-lateral for dealing with migration issues
  - They promote dialogue and exchange because of their non-binding nature
  - Most Asian countries are involved in one or more of the 5 RCPs in the region
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## **IOM Regional Seminar on Irregular Migration and Migrant Trafficking in East and South-East Asia (Manila Process)**

**16 States +  
Hong Kong SAR  
Established 1996**



### **Members**

Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Hong Kong (SAR of China)

### **Focus**

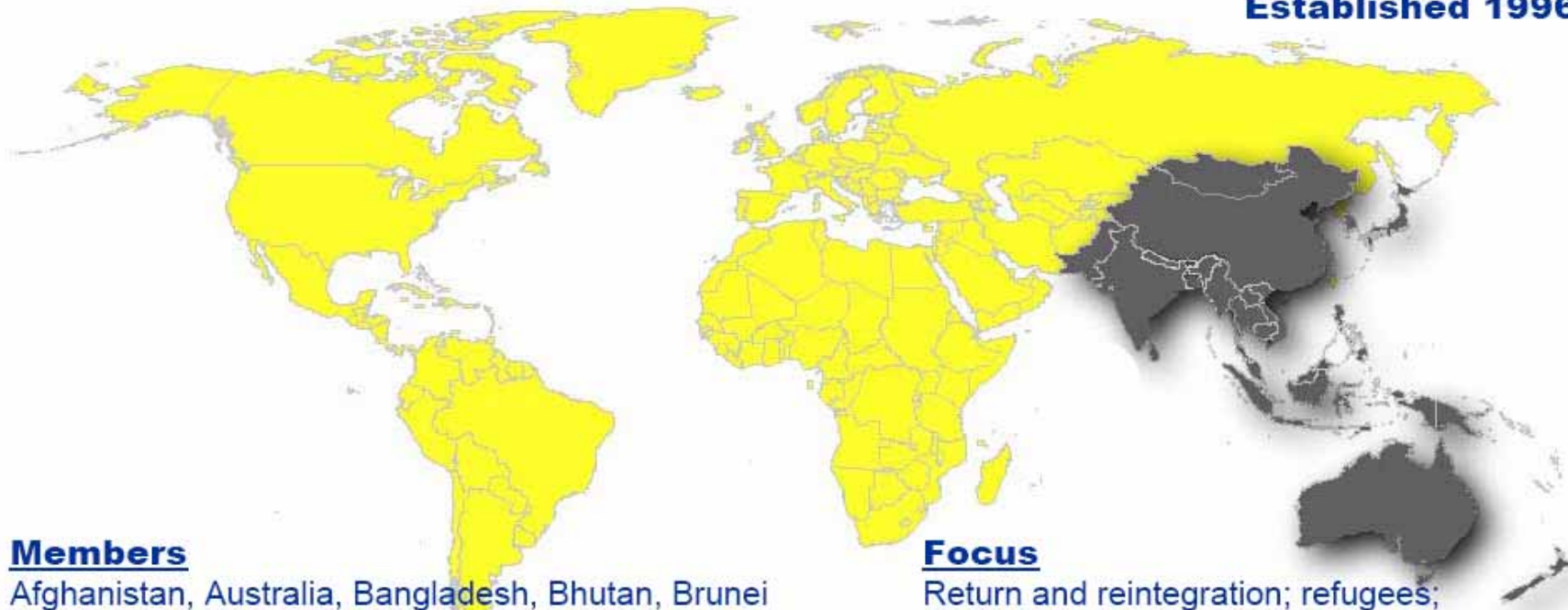
Irregular migration and trafficking; root causes of regular and irregular migration; return and reintegration; entry/border control; remittances; migrants' rights; capacity building; information sharing



**32 States +  
Hong Kong SAR**

**Established 1996**

## **Inter-Governmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC)**



### **Members**

Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong (SAR of China), India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia (France), New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam

### **Focus**

Return and reintegration; refugees; trafficking; entry/border control; asylum; irregular migration; labour migration; remittances; rights of migrants and IDPs; role of the country of origin; impact of economic crisis; public awareness campaigns; information sharing; burden sharing; capacity building





# **Bali Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Conference/Process)**

40 States + Hong Kong SAR + Macau SAR

Established 2002



## **Members**

Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, DPR Korea, Fiji, France (New Caledonia), Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Laos, Macau SAR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Syria, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tonga, Turkey, Vanuatu and Vietnam

## **Focus**

Trafficking and smuggling; irregular migration; information and intelligence sharing; fraudulent document detection; border management; visa systems; return and readmission; public awareness campaigns; harmonization of legislation, asylum practices and management; victim protection and assistance; development aid; law enforcement



# Labour Migration Ministerial Consultations for Countries of Origin in Asia (Colombo Process)

11 States

Established 2003



## Members:

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam

## Participating Destination States:

Bahrain, Italy, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates

## Focus

Labour migration and related programmes (protection of vulnerable migrants and provision of support services to them; optimising benefits of organised labour migration; capacity building, data collection and inter-state cooperation)

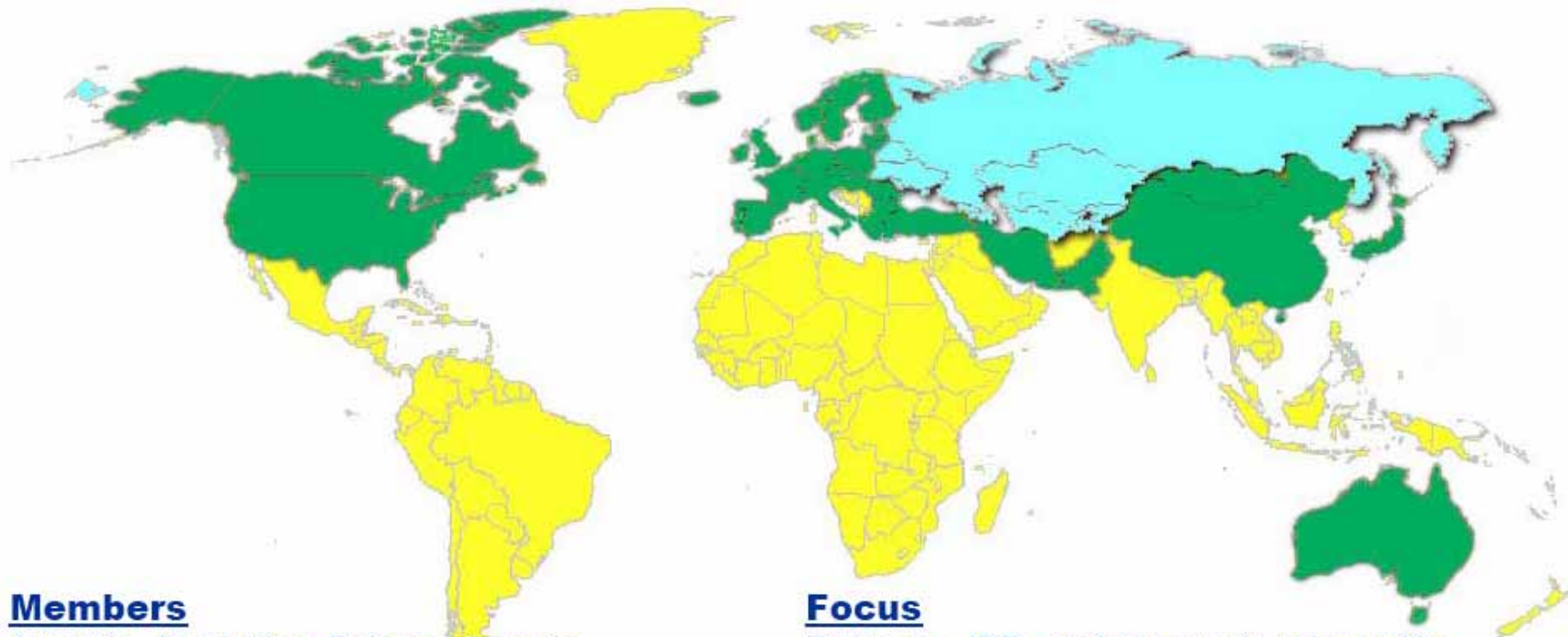




# CIS Conference

**12 CIS States and 36 “interested” States**

**Established 1996**



## **Members**

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Australia and 35 other “interested” States (from Europe, N. America, Asia and the Middle East)

## **Focus**

Refugees, IDPs and persons in refugee-like situations; repatriates; ecological migrants; migration management (combating illegal migration and trafficking, border management); migrants’ rights; return and reintegration; population/demography

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# Policy Development



- RCPs play an important role in increasing understanding of migration issues and improving dialogue between countries multi-laterally and bi-laterally
  - Existing RCPs focus on specific migration issues – trafficking/smuggling, displaced persons etc...
  - No forum to discuss broader migration issues or migration and development
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# Policy Development



- Migration data in Asia is at best fragmented and in many cases non-existent
  - Better data collection is needed
  - Effective policies require accurate and timely information
  - Countries are consistently calling for policy oriented research in the region
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# Conclusion



- Migration is increasing within the region and is an important aspect of development, both economic and social
  - Countries are increasingly interested in the links between the different types of migration (trafficking, smuggling, labour migration etc...)
  - Governments want to improve their understanding in order address the challenges and maximize the benefits of migration
  - Development partners need to do more to support international migration dialogue through RCPs and policy oriented research
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