

Towards safe, orderly and regular migration in the Asia-Pacific region

Challenges and opportunities

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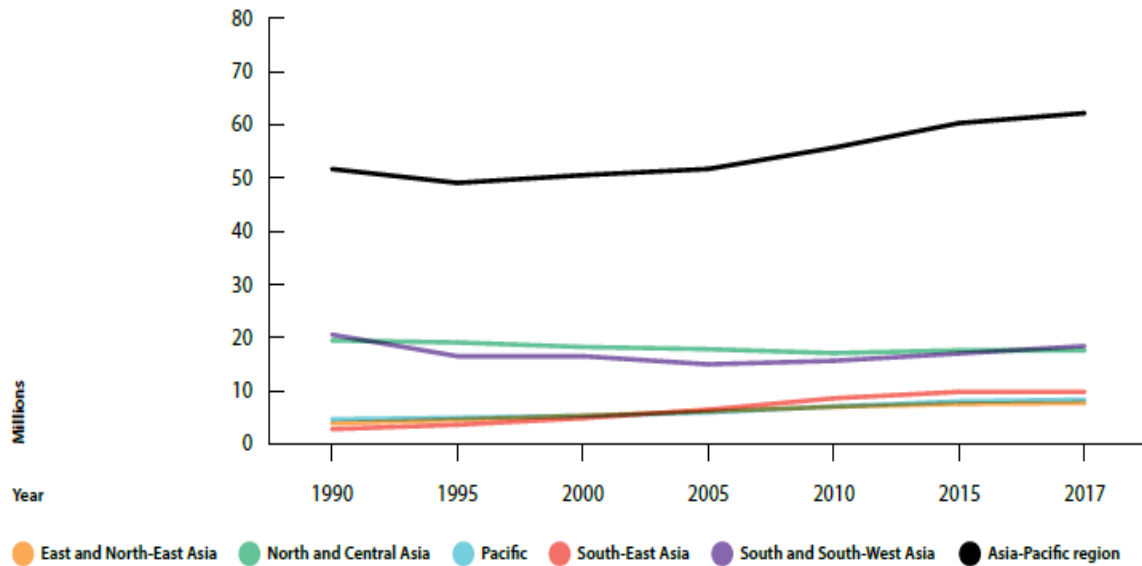


Towards Safe, Orderly
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Challenges and Opportunities



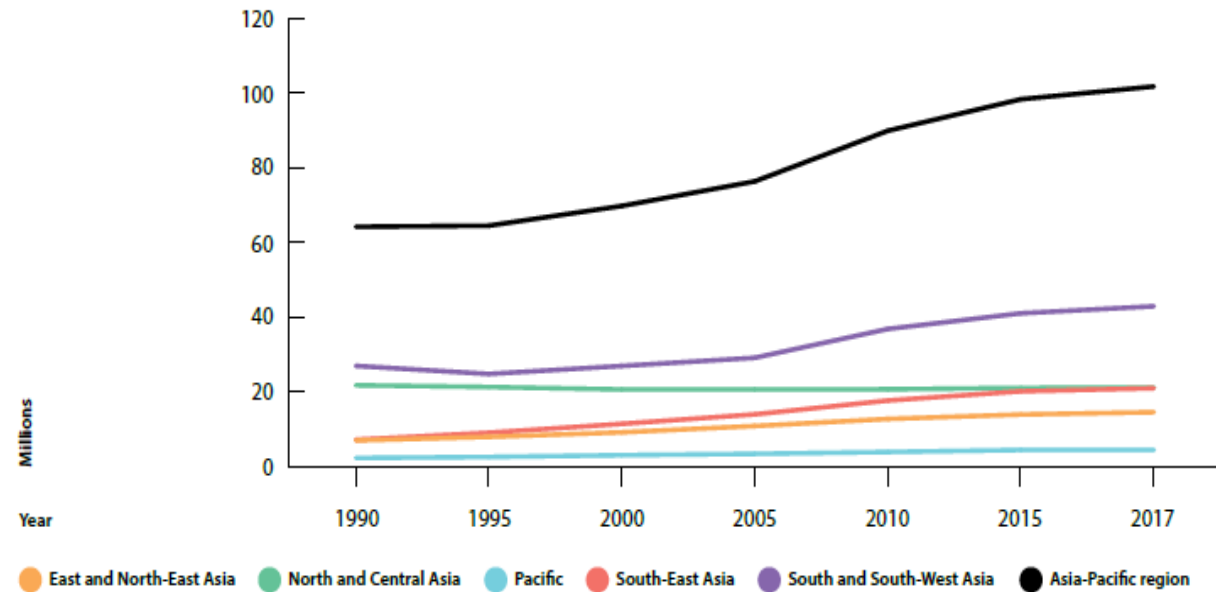
International migration to and from the region is on the rise...

FIGURE 1. MIGRANTS IN ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES, 1990–2017



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2017). *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision* (data for 2017 forthcoming, United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017).

FIGURE 2. MIGRANTS FROM ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES 1990–2017



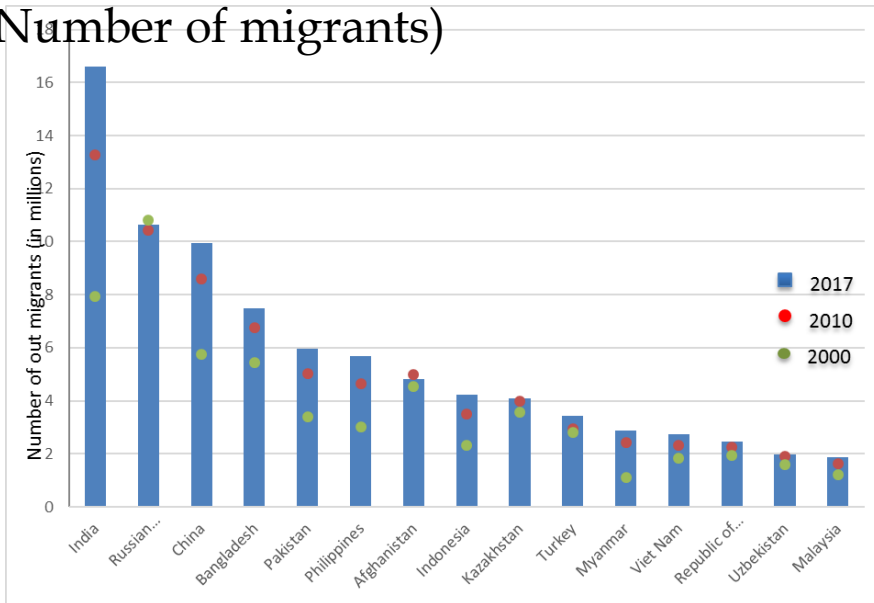
Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2017). *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 revision* (data for 2017 forthcoming, United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017).



South Asia is an important region for migration as origin and destination

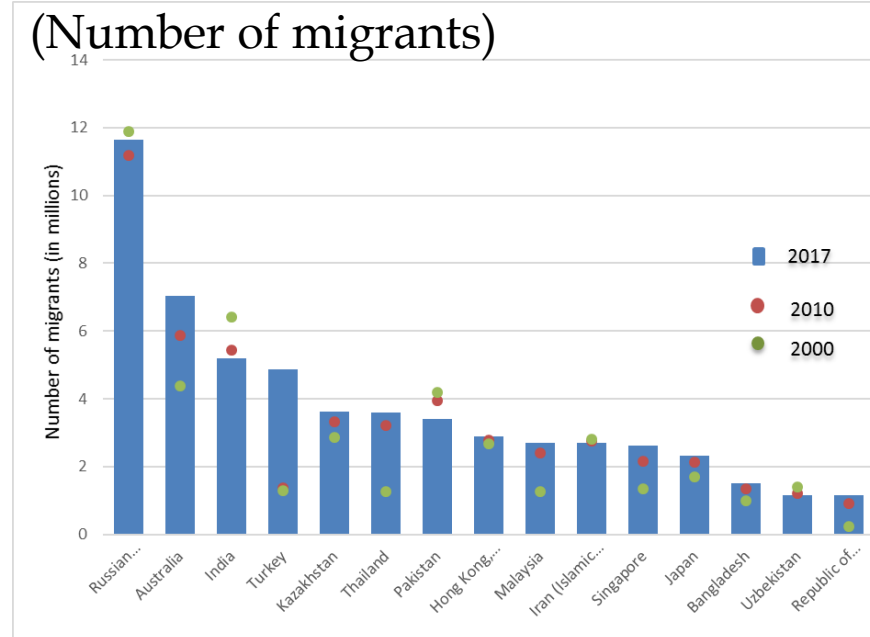
Top 15 countries of origin in Asia and the Pacific, 2000, 2010, and 2017

(Number of migrants)



Top 15 countries of destination in Asia and the Pacific, 2000, 2010, and 2017

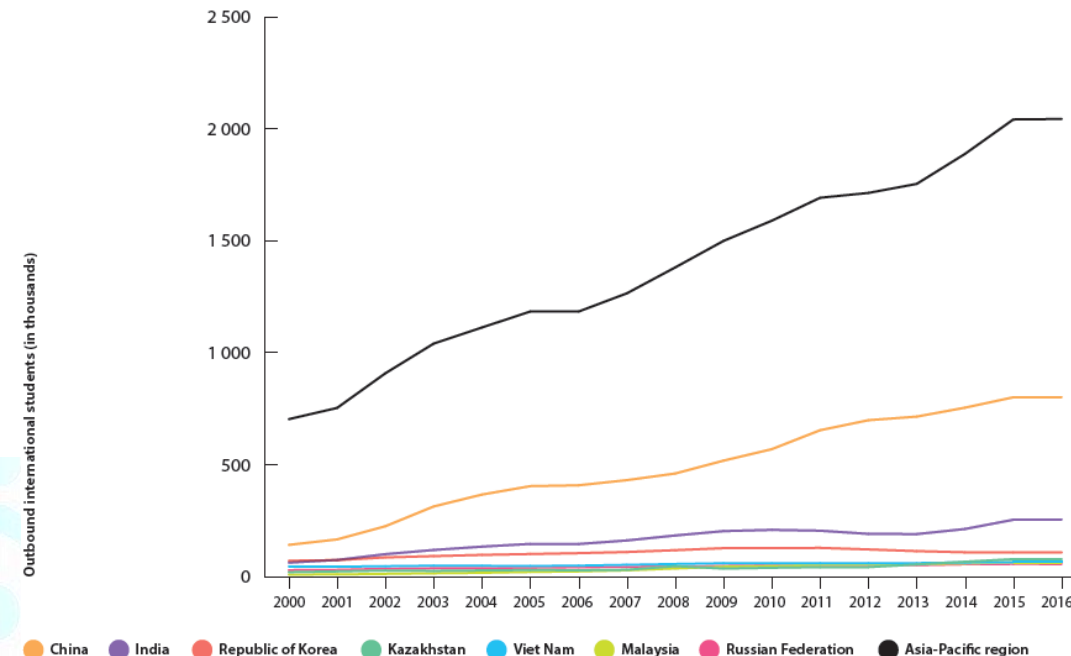
(Number of migrants)



...Though migration takes many forms

- ▶ **Labour migration** is the main migration trend in Asia-Pacific
- ▶ Mainly South-South and intra-regional
- ▶ Other forms of migration
 - ▶ Seasonal employment
 - ▶ High-skilled migration
 - ▶ Student migration
 - ▶ Migration in response to climate change impacts
- ▶ Women make up a slight majority of the total migrant stock
- ▶ Many migrants take irregular pathways...
- ▶ While many others are smuggled and trafficked





















FIGURE 9. OUTBOUND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FROM SELECTED ASIA-PACIFIC COUNTRIES, 2000–2016



Significant impact in countries of origin...

- ▶ Remittances to the Asia-Pacific reached **US\$276 billion** in 2017
- ▶ Remittances help to achieve SDGs and reduce poverty
 - ▶ reduction of number of people living in poverty by 6-7 percentage points in Kyrgyzstan between 2010-2013

TABLE 6. TOP REMITTANCE RECIPIENTS AND TEN YEAR TRENDS, 2016

	REMITTANCES RECEIVED, BILLION (UNITED STATES DOLLARS)		REMITTANCES AS PERCENTAGE OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		
	2016	10-YEAR TREND (2006-2016)	2016	10-YEAR TREND (2006-2016)	
India	62.7		Kyrgyz Republic	30.5	
China	61.0		Nepal	29.7	
Philippines	29.8		Tajikistan	26.9	
Pakistan	19.8		Samoa	16.8	
Bangladesh	13.7		Marshall Islands	14.7	
Viet Nam	13.4		Armenia	13.1	
Indonesia	9.2		Tuvalu	10.6	
Sri Lanka	7.3		Georgia	10.4	
Republic of Korea	6.4		Philippines	10.2	
Nepal	6.3		Kiribati	9.8	

...and in countries of destination

- ▶ Migrants boost productivity and GDP growth in destination countries
 - ▶ Migrants contributed 3.1-6.2% of GDP in Thailand in 2013 (US\$12-24 billion)
- ▶ Migrants pay taxes and consume in countries of destination, and can help build trade and investment linkages
- ▶ Migrants generally perform jobs complementary to national workers. Hence, create more jobs for domestic workers too



...yet migrants remain vulnerable and lack of social protection

- ▶ Migrants face exploitation and abuse, aggravated by factors such as irregular status, restrictive legal environments and gender discrimination
- ▶ Social protection is rarely extended to migrants
- ▶ High costs of migration and high costs of sending remittances

- ▶ Even though
 - ▶ International law recognises that migrants have equal rights, and should have equal working conditions



International cooperation on migration is critical

▶ Regional frameworks

- ▶ Eurasian Economic Union provides a comprehensive framework for labour migration
- ▶ ASEAN Declaration on Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers
- ▶ ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons
- ▶ SAARC's Kathmandu Declaration -Cooperation to Protect Migrant Workers
- ▶ Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking and related Transnational Crime
- ▶ Almaty process on Refugee Protection and International Migration
- ▶ Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue

▶ Global frameworks

- ▶ High-Level Dialogues on Migration and Development of UNGA, 2006, 2013
- ▶ Global Forums on Migration and Development (GFMD)
- ▶ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing For Development
- ▶ The 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants at UNGA launched the global compact on safe orderly and regular migration



Global Compact and the Asia-Pacific

- ▶ Ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration is a priority for the region
- ▶ The global compact process offers an important opportunity to strengthen the **global governance and enhance coordination** on international migration
- ▶ It would present a **framework for comprehensive international cooperation** on migrants and human mobility
- ▶ Guided by the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, among others
- ▶ The UN General Assembly mandated regional economic commissions of the UN like ESCAP to organize regional preparatory meetings of their members to feed into the global stock-taking meeting to be held in Puerto Valarta, Mexico during 4-6 December 2018



7 Key GCM priorities for Asia-Pacific

- ▶ **Creating more and simpler regular pathways for labour migration** of low-skilled workers, in line with countries' needs and development strategies, and international norms
- ▶ **Ensuring the fair treatment of migrant workers**, including in informal sectors, such as domestic work, in line with national labour regulations, and human rights standards
- ▶ **Ensuring ethical recruitment with fair and transparent costs** to avoid exposing migrants to situations of additional vulnerability
- ▶ **Reducing remittance transaction costs** by creating regular low cost remittance channels
- ▶ **Creating opportunities for regular migration** as a climate change adaption strategy or those who are forced to migrate as a result of natural disasters;
- ▶ **Combatting trafficking and smuggling of migrant workers** through information campaigns, better law enforcement, regional and subregional cooperation, and more opportunities for safe and regular migration, as well as through protection of victims of trafficking and smuggling;
- ▶ **Increasing multilateral and multi-stakeholder cooperation** on international migration to ensure policy coherence to address it in a comprehensive and balanced fashion



Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory on the Global Compact, Bangkok, 6-8 November 2017

Key highlights

- ▶ Recognized migrants as **agents** of sustainable development bringing positive benefits to both countries of origin and destination but often facing human rights abuses; sought to enhance their contributions through their **empowerment**
- ▶ Envisioned the global compact to be a **forward-looking** document centred around the fundamental human **rights of migrants**, regardless of status.
- ▶ Emphasised on **shared responsibilities** in managing migration including **actionable** commitments and mechanisms for follow up and review. To cover **all dimensions** of migration throughout the migration cycle, from pre-departure to return, should be **gender sensitive**
- ▶ Recognize the contribution of civil society, private sector and trade unions, and UN agencies including regional commissions, like ESCAP for regional follow up and review
- ▶ Highlighted the importance of cooperation to regulate and facilitate labour migration to mutually-beneficial ends between countries of origin and destination to be built upon for the global compact



Thank you

<http://www.unescap.org/our-work/social-development/international-migration>

