



IOM International Organization for Migration

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Introduction: the Bali Process Region and its diversities

While the Bali Process is considered a *Regional Consultative Process (RCP)*, the "region" it represents is far from being homogeneous and characterized by common features; more accurately the Bali Process is represented by several sub-regions that are linked together through common migration challenges. Its membership stretches from East Asia and Pacific through to South West Asia including 40 countries that are geographically, culturally, economically and socially very diverse. Consider that the Bali Process "region" accounts for close to 60% of the world's population, bringing together on equal footing 3 of the top 4 most populous nations on earth alongside nations with populations of less than 20,000 people. Similarly, there are highly developed countries, ranking near the top of the Human Development Index, States in transition as well as "lesser" developed States. A comparative look at figures for GDP per capita highlights the same contrasts. All major religions, climates and ecosystems are also represented through its membership.

The great diversities among the Bali Process membership inevitably impact on the migration patterns experienced by its members and it can be stated with a certain confidence that nearly all facets and features of migration are present within the boundaries of the Bali Process consultative process. There is robust labour migration, environmental population displacements, refugee flows, large scale cross-border migration; and, irregular migration movements that include smuggling and trafficking and 'mixed migration' movements that encompass various categories of migrants. The Bali membership includes origin, transit and destination countries and, increasingly countries that are impacted in each of these areas. While these diversities can be seen as challenges to effectively managing migration for the Bali Process decision-maker, they also present a unique opportunity to consider a multitude of migration challenges in developing strategies to address the core objective of stemming people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime – that is, working to integrate these strategies into a larger migration management framework. In doing so, the Bali Process provides an important vehicle to promote operational commonality with full respect to national sovereignty and regional diversity.

As migration presents many different faces in the region, this background paper prepared on the occasion of the 3rd Bali Process Senior Officials Meeting, aims to provide a snapshot of the predominant migration patterns and trends in the region, review the Bali Process role in enhancing dialogue and collaboration towards helping participants better address and manage these migration issues and highlight progress that has been made in this regard.

While the main focus of the Bali Process is people smuggling and trafficking in persons, this paper will also provide a general overview of the movement of persons in the region beyond these two phenomena as the forces that drive migration are interlinked and can not be addressed in isolation; rather a holistic and complementary approach is required. Therefore the main and latest migration issues and policies are also highlighted and contextualized with a view of contributing to the future directions of migration programming in the region, including of course the issues addressed by the Bali Process.

2. Overall migration trends and Patterns

Largely migration within the Bali Process 'region' has remained consistent in terms of patterns and flows since the last Senior Officials Meeting held in 2004. The region continues to be characterized by large scale migration mostly driven by economic and developmental disparities, social pressures and the search for better employment opportunities; and, a significant portion of these movements are irregular in nature.

Labour Mobility

In broad terms, labour supply and demand pressures are the primary driving forces fueling migration within the Bali Process grouping, both internally within countries and cross border. This of course is not a new phenomenon, but as has been widely studied, exponential population growth and the coinciding economic demands and pressures have combined with ease of travel to fuel robust international migration – both through regular and irregular channels - on an unprecedented scale.

Many countries in the Bali Process membership are major sources of migrant workers. In some cases these flows are directed outside the Region. A growing trend worth underlining is the increasing numbers of Asian migrants who are leaving to work in African countries. Among them, Filipinos in Africa have nearly doubled in the last few years, increasing from 5,000 in 2001 to 9,500 in 2006. China is also rapidly becoming an important country of origin for migrants going to Africa especially to South Africa where an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 Chinese migrants are working either as regular or irregular entrants. Another example is given by Lesotho, home to about 5,000 Chinese nationals both from Taiwan Province of China and the mainland.

Other and more traditional movements are those originating from India and other south Asian countries including Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. While Asian destinations now receive many more migrants, the Middle East continues to be the most popular destination. Most of these flows concern low-skilled migrants who take up construction or domestic work at destination. While India is also a country of destination (and it is amongst the 10 top countries hosting migrants) and transit, its level of emigration increased in 2005 and accounted for almost eight per cent of total inflows in Australia (compared to 5% for the period 1990-2004), 11 per cent to Canada (compared to 8%) and eight per cent in the United States (compared to 5%).

Many East Asian countries/areas, together with Thailand and Singapore, show a high dependence on foreign labour and the Migrant Labour Dependency Ratio (MLDR), defined as the number of migrant workers per 1,000 workers in the labour force, has significantly increased in the recent years.

Japan receives migrant workers from less developed Asian Countries, such as the Philippines and China, but it is interesting also to note that there is a growing presence of Russians in Japan's Northern Province. Past Japanese government estimates have cited these flows as reaching approximately 37,000 per year.

The ASEAN group of States sees a larger percentage of their migrant stock as coming from within the sub-region, though there is also significant migration to the region from South Asia. In Southeast Asia, Singapore has the highest number of international migrants on its territory (1.8 million) followed by Malaysia with 1.6 million. Although Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore show a strong reliance on foreign labour, many Southeast Asian countries are also major sources of migrant labour. The Economist Intelligence Unit (2006) forecasts that between 2005 and 2015 Singapore and Thailand will face a situation where the growth in labour demand will exceed growth in the working age population. These countries/areas are therefore expected to face incremental pressure on the demand for labour in connection with continued economic growth. The problem is most acute in Singapore.

In some countries, such as China and India, large scale internal migration for work dominates the landscape and, in the case of China, the pattern of domestic and temporary migration from inland village to manufacturing and service settings in the coastal provinces, has helped to generate a very large inflow of money from migrant workers to their families at home.

Turkey, which straddles Europe and Asia both geographically and in regional dialogue on migration, is both a country of origin and destination of migrants. The four recurring types of immigration are transit migration flows, irregular migration, movements of asylum seekers and refugees, and the registered migration of foreigners. In 2005 the total amount of immigrants numbered 1,328,405 with a female percentage of immigrants being 52.6 % and they were mainly directed to the EU. On the other hand, each year more than 100,000 irregular Turkish migrants leave to Europe and in 2005 the total amount of emigrants was 4,402,914.

While low-skilled migration is one of the predominant features of many countries migration, highly skilled emigration from East Asia is still an issue and it is coupled with a clear trend of students who leave their countries to study abroad. In 2007 350,000 Koreans left to the US to further their education.

Temporary migration for work, finally, is also a new trend that is lately gaining importance. For instance, the number of temporary workers to Australia has increased noticeably since 1996, when the government introduced a new temporary business entry visa that allows employers to sponsor skilled workers from overseas for a stay to up to four years. Similarly, temporary migration also increased in New Zealand over the last ten years and a total of 115,457 temporary work permits were issued in 2006/07. In addition, the number of young people coming to New Zealand as working holidaymakers have also increased lately reaching a total of 32,489 people in 2006/07 (www.dol.govt.nz). Other economies that also rely heavily on temporary workers from overseas are those in the Gulf Cooperation Council. As the number of expatriates of Arab origin has decreased, workers are now recruited from more distant origins.

Irregular Migration

Occurring in stride with the more formalized labour migration structures, the number of irregular migrants on the move for work is estimated to be significantly higher in number - its magnitude and features differing across the concerned sub-regions.

East Asia experiences irregular migration mostly in the form of over-stayers or persons engaging in work without proper documentation. In Japan, for instance, the Ministry of Justice estimated that in 2006 undocumented migrants numbered approximately 220,000¹. Taiwan Province of China is reported to be experiencing some irregular migration in the form of regular migrant workers who become clandestine residents because of problems with their employers.

A new trend in East Asia irregular migration is the decrease of some intra-regional flows, while other less traditional destinations are becoming more attractive. It is estimated that up to 200,000 irregular migrants from China are taking advantage of work opportunities created by the declining population in the Russian Far East².

In Southeast Asia, both Thailand and Malaysia have large numbers of irregular migrants. In July 2006, some 1.8 million irregular foreign workers, 65 per cent from Indonesia, were known to be employed in Malaysia particularly in manufacturing, construction and plantation work, but the number is likely to be much higher. Whereas, the estimates for the number of irregular migrants from Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar in Thailand range as high as 2 million, with only about ¼ being registered to work legally under its worker registration schemes. Irregular migration is also of concern in the Philippines, an important country of origin, where illegal recruiters make use of various schemes to lure workers to work abroad.

¹ Most recent government statistics indicate a reduction to approximately 113,000. (Government of Japan delegation to the Bali Process Senior Officials Meeting, 24-25 February, Brisbane, Australia.)

² According to the most recent government estimates, these numbers have significantly reduced. (Government of Peoples' Republic of China delegation to the Bali Process Senior Officials Meeting, 24-25 February, Brisbane, Australia.)

Although figures on irregular migration are not available for Singapore, the government is particularly watchful over the domestic services sector, and has introduced numerous regulations to ensure that workers respect their conditions of entry and employers abide by the terms of work contracts.

Irregular migration in South Asia is mostly discussed in connection with human trafficking, but irregular labour migration is also a focus of attention. This is particularly the case for flows from Bangladesh to India where the phenomenon has been going on for more than a century and has become somewhat of a permanent feature between the two countries, with no apparent decrease in scale. On the contrary, the flows of irregular migrants crossing the border have intensified recently. Once at their destination these migrants are mainly employed in daily wage labour, seasonal agriculture, or also domestic work. Irregular migration from Bangladesh does not affect India only but also destinations in the Middle East.

Finally, irregular movements for work in South Asia also include flows from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar to Pakistan. Many irregular Afghani migrants for instance manage to enter and work in Pakistan, as well as Iran with the help of networks established during the conflict period

Irregular migration is undoubtedly one of the most complex, sensitive and intractable migration management problems confronting the international community. As in many other regions in the world, the policies to address irregular migration in the Bali Process Region have coalesced around a number of well-established law enforcement driven policy objectives: the fight against organized people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related trans-national crime; and, more generally reducing the incidence of irregular migration. In this regard, the Bali Process has been instrumental in advancing law enforcement cooperation efforts, developing model legislation to address trafficking and smuggling, and advancing broad regional cooperation that builds upon and reinforces existing sub-regional and intra-regional initiatives. However, it must be recognized that law enforcement efforts need to parallel efforts aimed at better managing migration flows in response to prevailing labour supply and demand dynamics in the region, so as to reduce migrant vulnerability to smuggling and trafficking networks. In light of the looming global economic crisis, the number of migrants searching for work and finding themselves in vulnerable and desperate situations and easy prey to traffickers is expected only to increase.

Irregular migration, and particularly the trafficking in persons for all forms of exploitation, cannot be separated from the process of globalization in general and the move towards a more global economy. New labour markets emerge, creating new employment opportunities across the globe for skilled and less-skilled workers, both men and women. But such economic growth has not been matched with the evolution of safe, humane and orderly migration channels to facilitate and satisfy this demand for labour. This tension between the growing need for labour and services on one side, and too few regular migration opportunities on the other, creates a niche for smugglers, traffickers and other often unscrupulous intermediaries to intervene and profit from this situation.

Human Trafficking

While the predominance of irregular migration is not criminal in nature, and in many instances is tacitly tolerated by affected states, people smuggling activities and trafficking in persons are imbedded in these flows and are cause for serious concern. Seasonal cross border migration, cross border day passes, migrant registration processes and only loose oversight over some irregular flows have been common features within the region. And, for the most part, these bring benefits to migrants and employers as well as play a significant role in regional development, particularly among the lesser and developing countries. However, there is a delicate tradeoff in such approaches. On the one hand, it satisfies real labour supply and demand pressures, particularly in the lower skilled sectors that are not adequately addressed in national or bilateral policies/agreements. However, on the other hand, lack of regulation gives migrants little protection leaving them vulnerable to the precariousness of politics and economics, and indiscriminate exploitation by agents, brokers and employers.

Though there are no definitive statistics on the scale and number of trafficking in persons, owing in part to the clandestine nature of the crime and inconsistent data collection methodologies, estimates of the numbers trafficked within and across borders in the region range into the hundreds of thousands. As a whole, the region can be cited as a source, transit and destination region with many countries of the region being impacted at all three levels. There is domestic trafficking, intra-regional trafficking, as well as trafficking to/from countries outside the region.

In line with irregular migration patterns, human trafficking flourishes where socio-economic and developmental disparities, long contiguous borders and historical intra-regional migration patterns are exploited by trafficking networks and criminal exploiters. This is fuelled by the fact that the supply of potential workers exceeds the demand of available legal employment opportunities, whether through the formal or informal sector.

The competition that this inequity fosters creates a lucrative operational environment for brokers, smugglers and traffickers, who easily entice individuals with promises of work opportunities, and for exploitative employers, who seek to minimize employee benefits to reduce costs and raise profit margins. Finally, there are the migrants themselves, who are motivated by the promise of a better future for themselves and their families, never believing that they will fall prey to traffickers, whether they are aware of the potential danger or not.

The conflation of these factors conspires to perpetuate the trade in human beings in the region, reinforcing a global industry that is estimated by the UN to be a multi-billion dollar industry. While there has been a tremendous amount of progress over the past decade in implementing counter-trafficking legislation, national action plans, regional and bilateral agreements and other cooperative initiatives, migrant exploitation still thrives.

The feminization of migration also remains a salient feature of migration within the region. With employment opportunities and the number of destinations increasing worldwide, many more women are joining the migrant flows from Asian countries to Europe, the Middle East and North America and also within the Asian region itself. Similarly, recent data also show that women are migrating to Australia to take up managerial, professional and other positions that can not be filled locally.

Women represent about 60 per cent of the all migrants from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Moreover, women make up just over 15 per cent of Thai migrant workers, but the actual number may be considerably higher given that much female migration is undocumented and that most women migrants from Thailand work in the domestic sector which is not a protected category of employment under the legislation of many countries.

India is another country where there is a growing feminization of migration and a study conducted using the household level data on migration showed that while employment oriented migration constitutes 3-4%, marriage is reported as the predominant reason for migration for women in India (Shanti, 2006). Viet Nam and Cambodia are two more countries where marriage migration is becoming an increasing migration management challenge.

And while the importance of the role of migrant women in development can not be understated, they remain particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, whether in the form of unequal remuneration on one end of the scale, or extreme victimization in the form of sexual violence and exploitation on the other.

Emerging Issues - Migration amidst the global economic downturn

The current economic downturn has been characterized as the worst since the great depression; and while governments are taking unprecedented measures to stimulate ailing economies, many economists predict that the worst is yet to come. Increasingly, nations are feeling the effect of the global recession with rising unemployment rates, factory closures and steep declines in business and tourism revenues.

Given that the nature and extent of the financial crisis is yet to be fully understood, both its immediate and longer term consequences for migratory activity remain under discussion. There is, however, broad agreement that job losses, especially in the construction, manufacturing, and general service sectors will translate into more restrictive policies to protect local labour markets and, therefore, fewer opportunities overall for migrant workers. Although the World Bank has observed that remittances are expected to remain resilient relative to many other categories of resource flows (e.g. trade, foreign direct investment – FDI) to developing countries, the pattern of vigorous growth experienced in recent years is expected to give way to a decline of between 0.9 and 6 percent. Countries of origin are likely to experience influxes of returning migrants, with accompanying risks of economic and social instability in poorer countries.

At the same time, irregular migrants heretofore tolerated in less formal employment schemes or registration processes will find themselves even more vulnerable to expulsion and may choose to “disappear” into local economies, seeking work in even more hidden and less regulated industries. These circumstances, could well be taken advantage of by traffickers and smugglers to offer options of irregular travel to those desperate to seek or to recover jobs abroad; or even to seek clandestine avenues to return to their home countries becoming easy prey to agents and ‘facilitators’ along the way.

Conclusions

Migration is by its very nature creates interdependent linkages, whether between regions within a country or across borders and continents. No country can claim to be in a position to respond to and manage these movements on its own, all the more so since the policies of other countries influence migration flows and the effectiveness of domestic policies. The awareness of the ineffectiveness of unilateral actions, increased diversity of migratory routes and patterns of flows (cutting across regions and continents; reacting to changes in external factors such as immigration policies, economic situations and employment opportunities), and inter-linkages with other global issues such as trade, development and human rights have increasingly led states to acknowledge the need for international cooperation in migration management.

However, states have generally been reluctant to translate this growing awareness into concrete action by accepting trade-offs between sovereignty and international regulatory mechanisms. Progress has mainly occurred at the regional and bilateral levels, where common interests between countries of origin and destination are more easily identified and mutual benefits worked out. But even at these levels, the general tendency has been to engage in informal, as opposed to legal or more formal means of cooperation.

Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs) play a particularly useful role in this regard. Though generally non-binding and informal in nature, they provide important fora for dialogue on key issues of mutual concern; and while their results may not always be measurable in absolute terms, they greatly facilitate a habit of open cooperation and exchange on sensitive issues that can lead to concrete results

In keeping with the non-institutional character of RCPs, their administrative structures are kept simple, often in the form of small secretariats hosted by an international organization. As such, they are both cost-effective and flexible, allowing member and participating States to adapt and respond to the evolving nature of migration trends and challenges.

Bali Process progress since 2004, changing landscapes, emerging issues and the way forward

It was noted by Senior Officials in their report to Ministers in 2004 that the main objective of the Bali Process, as laid out by their ministers in two ministerial meetings held in 2002 & 2003, was “to raise awareness of and develop greater cooperation among regional countries to combat people smuggling and trafficking” and that the Bali Process had contributed to this objective by creating “an environment in which regional countries were cooperating increasingly (including bilaterally and sub-regionally) in preventing and intercepting people smuggling (and, to a lesser extent, trafficking)

activities, prosecuting those responsible and strengthening border management". And, while it may not be fair to state that all achievements made by States in this regard are directly attributable to the Bali Process, credit must be given to the fact that its existence as a regional consultative process has forged cooperation in ways that can't always be conveniently measured.

The Bali Process as such was intended to be a catalyst for change, capacity strengthening and closer coordination among its membership. To achieve this objective, networks have been established among law enforcement officers and their agencies, numerous workshops of common purpose have been held and the region as a whole has significantly advanced on the strength of national, bilateral and multilateral progress that has been attained. These achievements have served to strengthen and underpin the Bali Process as a practical, solution oriented forum that has seen the common denominator in terms of legislative, policy and operational development raised on several fronts among its membership. Consider, for example that since the Senior Officials Meeting of 2004, at least 19 countries in the Bali Process membership have passed anti-trafficking legislation, 9 have adopted National Plans of Action and several others are in process of drafting or considering one or the other, or both. Additionally there have been numerous arrests and convictions of smugglers and traffickers.

There are also numerous sub-regional and bilateral initiatives that have been forged since the 2004 Bali Process Senior Officials Meeting that in one way or another contribute to the reduction of migrant exploitation and a general strengthening of the coordinated responses across the membership. The Greater Mekong Sub-region hosts no fewer than 4 bilateral MoUs on trafficking in persons, with others in draft, as well as a regional MoU on the same. The ASEAN grouping of countries has also passed declarations "Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, a Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance.

Such examples of strengthened cooperation perhaps are not directly attributable to the Bali Process, but it is nonetheless noteworthy that the Bali Process has served as an enabling process that has mainstreamed broad regional dialogue on the issue of people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime that can be drawn upon in complement to States' efforts; whether it be as a source of model draft anti-trafficking legislation that could be drawn upon to develop a nation's first anti-trafficking legislation, in the case of Palau, a vector through which states engage in bilateral support initiatives spawned through linkages and contacts made in Bali Process events, or a platform for hosting targeted workshops to resolve known cases of smuggling, trafficking or child sex tourism.

Whatever the circumstances, the collective efforts of the Bali Process membership has clearly achieved an elevated atmosphere of collaboration since the first Ministerial Conference in 2002. However, though there has been considerable progress made in addressing smuggling and trafficking challenges remain. Continued vigilance and focus is required to continue to address emerging issues, including the following:

- significant numbers of mixed migration flows in recent months involving Muslims from the Northern Rakhine State;
- the issue of trafficking of men into the fishing industry which raises both humanitarian concerns as well as concerns over people smuggling and state security;
- the continued need for improved data collection and exchange on smuggling and trafficking patterns and flows;
- greater inter-regional cooperation between relevant RCPs to address cross-regional trafficking and smuggling;
- the global economic downturn, which will continue to impact our economies and in turn will raise a range of migration challenges including increased vulnerability among migrants to trafficking and smuggling;
- likewise, the environmental changes that may impact on individual livelihoods and prompt migration.

Not all of these challenges can be addressed through the Bali Process as they require a comprehensive approach to migration management that extends beyond law enforcement cooperation. However, they all will potentially (inevitably) impact upon the trafficking and smuggling dynamics

across the membership and thus must be considered by member states in stride with efforts aimed at addressing these crimes.

Apart from this, there is clearly an opportunity for forging closer inter-regional cooperation between Regional Cooperation Processes addressing migration. The advantages in promoting inter-regional cooperation were recognized at the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) held in Manila last October, where the Royal Thai Government agreed to host a global meeting of RCPs. The meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for the 3rd quarter of 2009, will bring together representatives of the respective secretariats and chairing countries to share experiences and seek avenues for closer cooperation.

Finally, this paper has tried to provide an overview of the Bali Process Region as far as migration trends and patterns are concerned. However, it is by no means exhaustive. There are numerous migration scenarios that have not been addressed, including large scale displacement issues and continuing refugee and asylum seeker flows, as these have not been mainstream Bali Process concerns. It is nevertheless recognized that there is an inherent vulnerability in these situations that feeds into the general observations made on irregular migration and its links to people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime – none of which can be effectively addressed in isolation.

Given the complexity of migration in the region and diversity of its members, the challenge now faced by the Bali Process is to further strengthen its collaboration and continue to advance the progress made to date in a way that builds upon the ongoing general capacity development activities toward achieving specific operational objectives aimed at disrupting and deterring smuggling and trafficking.

Sub-regional briefs on migration trends and patterns that link together Bali Process States

Middle East

The Middle East region has a history of intra-regional labour migration largely determined by the pull of affluent Gulf States. The migration dynamics between countries of origin and destination continue to yield important economic benefits for the region. Evolving socio-economic conditions, combined with the effects of globalization, could impact on established regional migration patterns. The potential return of certain categories of contractual workers in search of scarce reintegration opportunities could affect the socio-economic situation of countries of origin. The dilemma facing the Middle East region is to maintain the traditional intra-regional migration balance in an environment increasingly affected by issues relating to population growth, unemployment and the depletion of natural resources. Irregular migration and trafficking in human beings constitute additional concerns for most countries in the region. Overall, governments have made serious efforts and significant progress in combating trafficking, especially during the past year, by introducing new legislation and other counter trafficking measures.

South Asia

Population movement has long been a significant phenomenon in South Asia. More than 1.5 million workers migrate abroad from South Asia annually, most of them to the Gulf region to do manual work. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are among the top 10 countries of emigration from South-Asia while India is amongst the top 10 countries hosting migrants in the same region. In the context of labour migration, all countries in the region are major countries of origin, with India also being a country of destination or transit.

There are also significant displacement issues, with some 2 million displaced Afghans living in Pakistan and 900,000 documented Afghans in Iran; with another one million undocumented Afghans in Iran, the majority of whom are single adult males who continue to migrate to Iran clandestinely in search of economic opportunities. This has posed considerable challenges to both Iran as a host country and for Afghanistan as the country of origin. The current labour migration flow between Afghanistan and Iran is increasingly reliant on highly organized clandestine solutions, in the face of detention and deportation.

Southeast Asia

The dominant direction of international and internal migration alike is very closely related to the economic and demographic situation in a country. Countries in Southeast Asia that have a relatively low per capita gross domestic product (GDP) and a high rate of growth among the working-age population are countries of out-migration. Thailand is currently the only country in Southeast Asia with an intermediate per capita GDP and growth rate of working-age population, and it experiences significant levels of both in- and out-migration. The more economically advanced countries have low or negative rates of growth of working-age population and record net in-migration.

Countries in Southeast Asia are increasingly economically inter-linked and the trend is toward further regional economic integration. Intra-regional trade in the Greater Mekong Subregion³ (GMS) in 2007 was 11 times more than what it was in 1992. Moreover, intraregional tourism and intraregional Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) are also soaring with Thailand and China being the largest investor in GMS. Infrastructure development such as the economic corridors and demographic changes will continue contributing to, and accelerate this trend. As this occurs, migration becomes an even more important national and regional issue. While the impacts that the current economic downturn will have on migration patterns in the GMS are not well understood, it is likely that the mobility of people between these countries, and especially to fill in some labour gaps in particular sectors, will continue to increase.

While there is a move to increased economic inter-linkage, Southeast Asia is characterized by wide economic disparities among the States. These disparities shape the migration flows and make it very difficult for the countries involved to establish coherent migration management policies. Governments in the regions are trying to manage the supply of, and demand for migrant workers in a way that meets market needs and minimizes irregular migration. While progress is being made in this regard, opportunities for regular migration remain limited, and employer and migrants react by working outside the existing regular framework.

As such there is a considerable amount of migrant smuggling and trafficking occurring both within the region, and to destinations beyond.

East Asia

East Asia migration patterns are significant and follow from several common purposes across this sub-region: migration for labour, migration for marriage and family unification, and migration related to smuggling and human trafficking. These kinds of migratory movements bind China (including Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR), Korea (ROK) and Mongolia with one another, as well as to other countries in Asia. In the area of trafficking, the dominant forms involve sexual exploitation, forced labour, false marriages, and debt bondage.

There are also significant labour movements within the region, not only as a region of destination for Southeast Asian and other nationals, but also in terms of outward migration with China, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia all experiencing high outflows of migrants. Notably, China ranks as the largest migrant-sending country in the world ahead of India and then the Philippines. With about 126 million

³ Cambodia, China (Yunnan province), Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam.

internal migrants in 2006, China is also the country, together with India, with the most significant level of internal labour migration globally.

The Republic of Korea, Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR and Japan are also destination countries for trafficking in persons, primarily for the sex industry from Southeast Asia, as well as South American and CIS States

The Pacific

Though seemingly isolated from irregular migration flows, the smaller Pacific Island nations find themselves at a cross roads for migrants seeking to gain access to Australia, New Zealand and the Americas and as destinations for migrants from China. There have also been reported cases of trafficking in persons both for sexual exploitation as well as labour exploitation originating from East and Southeast Asia and as far away as South Asia

Many Pacific nations are also coming under severe economic strain owing to their limited territory, market size and remote location. Further international economic aid, which had enabled the development and construction of local infrastructure and the delivery of important services, may no longer be able to mitigate their growing cost disadvantages. Hence, facilitated labour mobility and seasonal labour schemes remain prominent features of migration dialogue between the smaller island nations and larger neighbours Australia and New Zealand. In 2007, New Zealand launched a pilot programme (Recognized Seasonal Employers Scheme) that facilitates the temporary entry of seasonal workers from Pacific States to address labour shortages in New Zealand's horticulture and viticulture industries. Australia is in the process of launching its own pilot seasonal worker programme also targeting temporary workers from selected Pacific Island countries. Fiji, which has been supported by UN peacekeepers for several decades, has itself recently become a source of temporary skilled migrants, contributing as members of peacekeeping forces, security personnel, nurses and other contractual work to Iraq, Middle East and other destinations.

In the case of Australia and New Zealand, the two countries are among the few countries in the world to have active immigration programmes and are the major destinations in the region for both migrants and refugees. They also employ temporary migration for work policies, though largely they have targeted skilled workers.

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