

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

**International Migration:
An Emerging Opportunity for the
Socio-economic Development
of the ESCAP Region**

Social Policy Paper No. 6



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Chief
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Social Development Division, ESCAP
United Nations Building
Rajadamnern Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10200, Thailand
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E-mail: socdev.unescap@un.org

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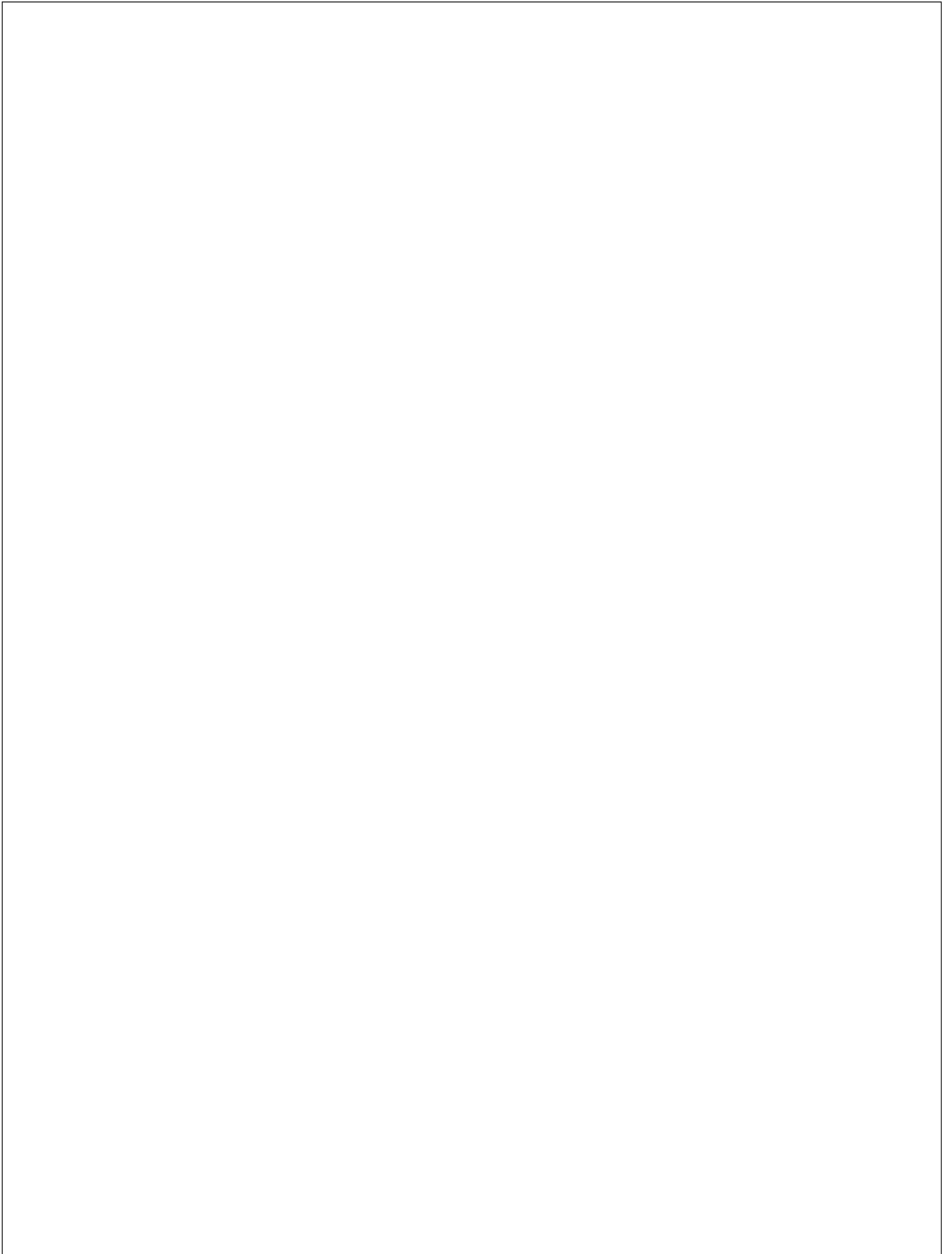
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Preface

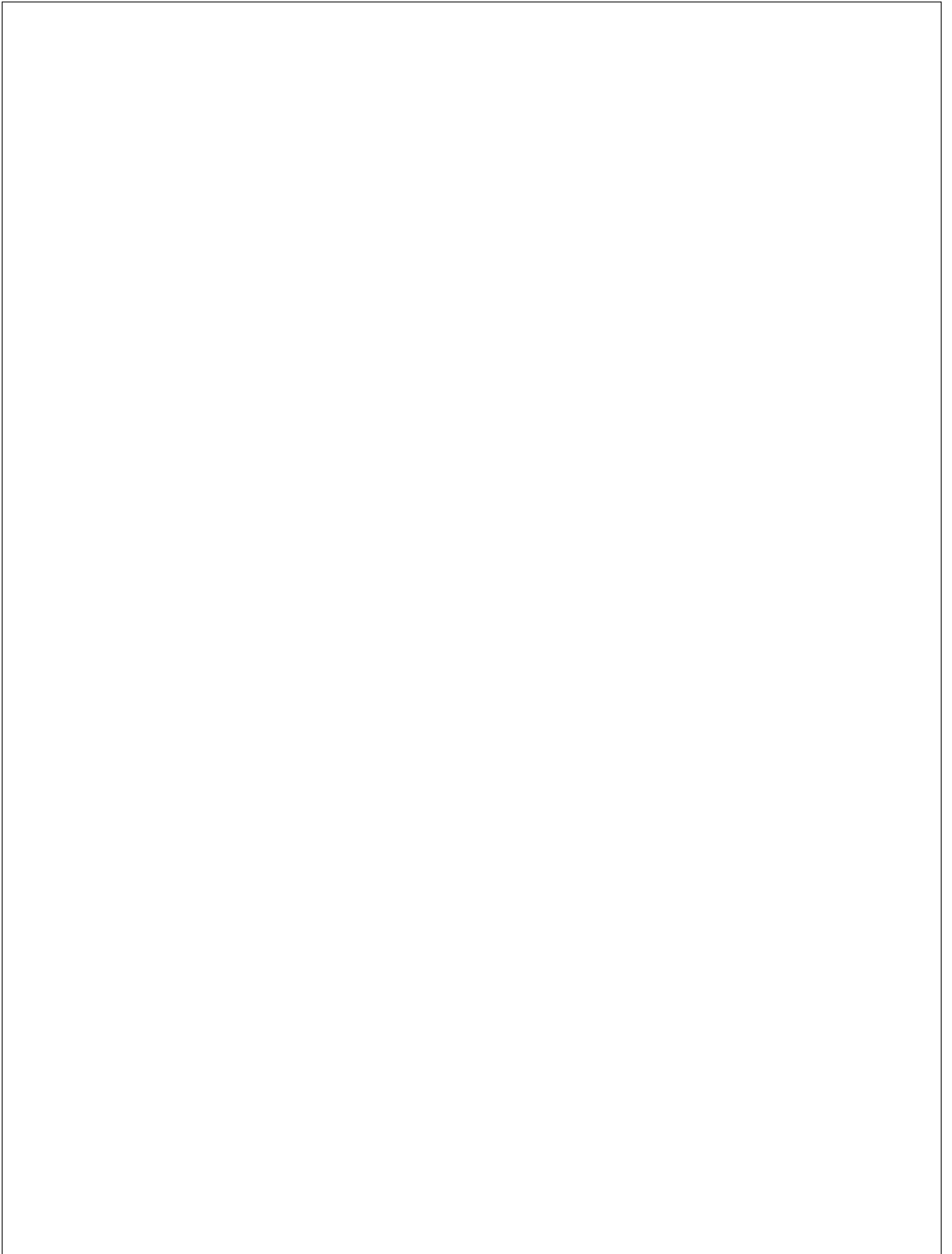
This paper provides a brief discussion of the current approaches in treating international migration as an emerging social development issue that merits attention in the post-Copenhagen Declaration years, with special emphasis on changing demographic dynamics and their implications for social development in the ESCAP region. An analysis is made of the key trends, including: (a) push factors that propel migrants away from their home countries; (b) pull factors that attract migrants to receiving countries; (c) social/economic barriers that hinder or factors that facilitate migration in the region; and (d) the socio-economic consequences of migration for countries of origin, destination and transit. The paper highlights the consequences of irregular migration and its effects on trafficking in women and children. The paper also provides some policy options to develop effective national migration policies and suggests a regional framework for further cooperation on migration.

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Contents

	<i>Page</i>
PREFACE	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
I. THE ASIA-PACIFIC MIGRATION SYSTEM	5
A. South Asia and West Asia	5
B. East Asia	8
C. South-East Asia	10
D. North and Central Asia	13
E. Pacific	14
II. INITIATING AND SUSTAINING INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION	21
A. Factors that initiate migration	21
B. Factors that sustain migration	27
III. CONSEQUENCES OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION	29
IV. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND PROSPECTS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	35
A. Growing demand for the highly skilled, continuing demand for the less skilled	35
B. More female migration	36
C. The threat of irregular migration, particularly trafficking in persons, especially women and children	36
D. Policy implications	37
REFERENCES	43



INTRODUCTION

The change in the patterns of international migration from and within the Asia-Pacific region took place at a time when economic growth was taking off in the region, thereby hinting at the links between migration and social change, and particularly between migration and development. Asia used to be a region marked by poverty and international migration, then was mostly directed to the West. But since the 1970s, several high-performing economies emerged – initially Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China, and later Malaysia and Thailand – transforming East and South-East Asia into a region of prosperity. The gulf between these newly industrialized countries (NICs) and the less developing countries added another dimension to the political, cultural, social and demographic diversities in Asia. Economic growth in the NICs opened educational and occupational opportunities for their nationals, leaving some sectors in need of workers willing to take up low-end jobs. Gaps in living standards and disparities in capital and labour supply and labour demand contributed to the conditions that set the stage for labour migration within the region. In the beginning of the 1980s, there were about a million foreign workers in East and South-East Asia (including long-term resident Koreans in Japan and Indonesians in Malaysia); their number exceeded three million by 1990 (Abella, 1995:125); and more recently, a conservative estimate would be at least 5.3 million migrants, both legal and irregular, in East and South-East Asia (tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Stock of regular migrants in selected Asian countries or areas

	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Philippines</i>	<i>Thailand</i>	<i>China</i>	<i>Bangladesh</i>	<i>Burma</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
Japan ^a	(11,936)	(93,265)	(20,669)	(252,164)	(5,900)	–	(1,098,773)	(1,482,707)
Republic of Korea ^b								172,501
	(9,600)	(10,800)	–	(26,700)	(6,300)	–	(95,300)	(148,700)
Taiwan Province of China ^c	77,830	98,161	141,180	–	–	–	77,589	394,760
Hong Kong, China ^d	34,300	146,400	25,000	–	–	–	–	205,700
Thailand ^e								109,786
	–	–	–	–	–	(75,091)	(15,381)	(90,472)
Malaysia ^f	490,550	14,828	7,222	–	224,609	–	37,501	774,710
Singapore ^g	(100,000)	(60,000)	(60,000)	(46,000)	–	–	(184,000)	(450,000)

^a As of 1997 (Watanabe, 1998); “Others” includes 645,373 Koreans.

^b Figures in brackets are as of 1996 (SOPEMI, 1998); the figure 172,501 is as at the end of 2000 (Battistella, 2001).

^c As at the end of 2000 (Battistella, 2001). “Others” includes 77,476 from Viet Nam and 316 from Malaysia.

^d Mid-1997 (Ng and Lee, 1998).

^e Figures in brackets are as at the end of 1998 (SMC estimates).

^f End of 1998 (SMC, 1999).

^g Figure in brackets are as of 1998 (ILO estimate); the 530,000 figure is as of 2000 (Battistella, 2001).

Table 2. Estimate of irregular migrants in selected Asian countries or areas

	<i>Japan^a</i>	<i>Republic of Korea^b</i>	<i>Taiwan Province of China^c</i>	<i>Malaysia^d</i>	<i>Thailand^e</i>
Bangladesh	(5,864)	13,774		246,400	
Cambodia					48,432
China	(38,957)	85,429			
Indonesia			2,700	475,200	
Malaysia	(10,926)		400		
Myanmar	(5,957)			25,600	484,926
Pakistan	(4,766)	5,179		12,000	
Philippines	(42,627)	11,850	5,150	9,600 ^f	
Republic of Korea	(52,854)				
Taiwan Province of China	(9,403)				
Thailand	(38,191)	11,309	6,000	8,000	
Others	(72,242)	38,357	5,750	23,200	64,577
Total	(281,787) 251,697	165,898	20,000	800,000	597,937

^a Figures in brackets refer to overstayers, end of 1997, (Watanabe, 1998). The figure 251,697 is as at 1 January 2001 (Battistella, 2001:8).

^b As of August 2000 (Battistella, 2001:10) other large groups mentioned are Mongolians (12,155) and Uzbeks (41,059).

^c Estimate based on overstayers and apprehensions (Lee, 1998).

^d Estimate based on 1996 regularization (Kassim, 1998).

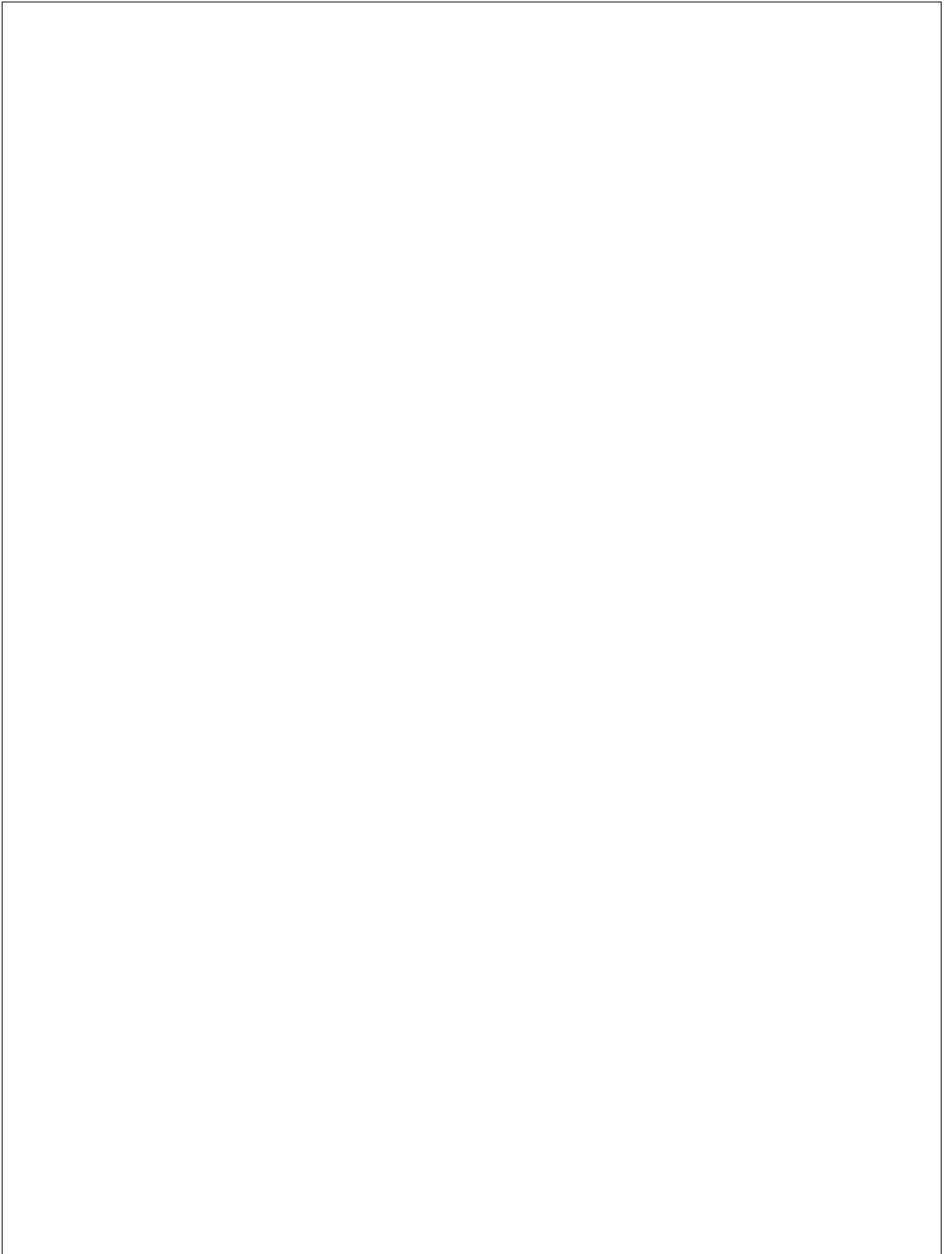
^e End of 1998 government estimate.

^f Add approximately 150,000 Filipinos still in an irregular situation in Sabah.

Outside of the migration literature, the link between increasing labour migration and the East Asian economic miracle is not that appreciated. Receiving Governments do not readily acknowledge the role of labour migration in the development of their societies. The denial or the refusal to allow the importation of migrant workers by some receiving countries, however, did not stop labour migration from taking place. During the period of high economic growth, migrant workers were tolerated, especially since they took jobs shunned by local workers. But when the crisis hit in 1997-1998, Governments in destination countries immediately announced the repatriation of migrant workers (particularly those in an irregular situation) and the strengthening of border controls to deter irregular migration (Battistella and Asis, 1999). These responses turned out not only to be ineffective but also misdirected, as labour shortages persisted in the sectors migrants worked in. In contrast, countries of origin acknowledge the contributions of international migration,

citing such benefits as providing a safety net for unemployment, the role of remittances in generating foreign exchange and technology transfer/skills acquisition. For these reasons, some countries of origin consider migration in their development plans.

Analysts and observers note that Asia will have to brace for a different economic environment in the twenty-first century. Globalization, information technology and democratization are changing the world Asia faces in the new century (ADB, 2000:224). Prospects for growth in other parts of the region seem bleak since the supply of capital to export industries – an important factor in the rise of second-tier NICs – has dwindled considerably. The crisis exposed the weaknesses and vulnerabilities in Asian economies, particularly the lack of effective social safety nets. What kind of role will international migration play in a more competitive world? Specifically, what kinds of opportunities – as well as threats – will international migration imply for socio-economic development prospects in the ESCAP region? Answers to these questions will be sought by examining migration trends and globalization-related processes in the region. Chapter 1 of this paper reviews migration trends in the Asia-Pacific region in the last 30 years (i.e., covering the years before the crisis, the crisis and the immediate post-crisis period); chapter 2 examines the factors that initiated, facilitated and sustained international labour migration; chapter 3 presents the consequences of international migration in the countries of origin and destination; and chapter 4 identifies policy concerns for further reflection and action, particularly in relation to the social development goals envisioned by the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration.



I. THE ASIA-PACIFIC MIGRATION SYSTEM

Considering the diversity of the region and the migration systems that have developed therein, a summary of international labour migration trends is presented by subregion. The review begins with the South Asia-West Asia connections. Embarking on an industrialization project fueled by oil revenues, the Gulf countries tapped countries in South Asia and later, South-East Asia, to meet their huge labour requirements. In the 1980s, NIC-hood spread from Japan to other countries in East and South-East Asia. Coinciding with the slowdown in the demand for workers in the Gulf countries (due to the slump in oil prices and the completion of many infrastructure projects), these two regions provided alternative destinations for migrant workers. In North and Central Asia, political changes rather than economic changes augured international migrations in the 1990s. Finally, in Oceania, Australia and New Zealand increasingly attracted Asian immigrants, in addition to being the focal points of immigration from the Pacific islands. The discussion highlights the migration of the less skilled, but it should be mentioned that movements of the highly skilled and professionals are also taking place as are other types of temporary migration (e.g., student migration). Permanent emigration to traditional countries of settlement also continues, with Asia figuring as a major region of origin of migrants. Refugee migrations are almost a fixture in the region, with new conflict zones emerging as soon as solutions to old conflicts have been reached. These different types of migration – labour migration, the migration of the highly skilled and professionals, permanent migration and refugee migration – proceed either through regular or irregular channels. As the following discussion shows, irregular migration is significant in the region. A specific form of irregular migration, trafficking in persons, especially women and children,¹ heightens concerns about protection issues.

A. South Asia and West Asia

Bangladesh, India and Pakistan had supplied the Middle East with workers since the 1970s. A relative latecomer to the Gulf countries, Sri Lanka pursued the export of domestic helpers, the only country in South Asia where women comprise the great majority of

¹ Irregular migration refers to departure from the rules and norms of the migration regime of a country of origin, transit or destination while trafficking is a more violent and abusive form of irregular migration. As defined in the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, trafficking in persons shall mean the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”

migrants.² To this day, South Asia's labour export programme remains wedded to the Gulf, the destination of between 75 and 96 per cent of overseas workers (table 3).³ The Government is active in promoting labour migration in the case of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.⁴ In these three countries, State agencies are involved in promoting labour export, monitoring the conditions of their workers abroad and promoting the welfare of migrants and their families.

The reliance of South Asian countries on the Gulf labour market renders them vulnerable to changes in the latter. Although the destabilizing impacts of the 1991 Gulf War turned out to be temporary (in fact, they recovered quite fast as South Asian workers were tapped for reconstruction projects after the war), the experience highlighted the precariousness of relying on a single destination. Changes in the labour demand in the Gulf countries are forthcoming, especially with their goal of nationalizing their work force. South Asian countries will have to invest in human resource development programmes in order to be competitive. Also, in the long term, they will have to tap other destinations as the Gulf countries move to reduce their dependence on foreign workers.

Intraregional migration also takes place in South Asia, but such flows tend to be either forced migration or irregular migration. Almost all of the South Asian countries are either origin or receiving countries for refugees and asylum seekers, the internally displaced and other persons of concern. As at 31 December 1999, India had some 180,000 refugees; Bangladesh was host to about 22,200 Rohingyas from Burma; and Nepal had some 127,900 refugees (about 100,000 are refugees from Bhutan) (UNHCR, 2000:307). Pakistan hosted 3,250,000 Afghans, who had fled during the Soviet occupation (1979-1990) (UNHCR,

² The three countries do not encourage female migration. India and Bangladesh used to ban the migration of women who will take up domestic work, but this has been modified through age requirements. Bangladesh requires that women be at least 25 years old to work as domestic workers; India requires that women be at least 30 years old to work as domestic helpers in West Asia and North Africa. Pakistan sets an age requirement of 35, which virtually keeps women out of the international labour market (Lim and Oishi, 1996:40-41). In 1998, Bangladesh allowed women to work as domestic helpers for Bangladeshi expatriates. Legal female migration from these countries is very negligible. However, there are indications that women migrate anyway but through irregular channels.

³ The Republic of Korea, the Philippines and Thailand also sent large numbers of workers to the Gulf countries in the 1970s. The Republic of Korea and Thailand ceased doing so when their economies took off. The Philippines continues to send workers to the Middle East, and the region continues to be the major region of destination of Filipino workers.

⁴ Among the South Asian countries, India is the least involved in international labour migration because it is smaller compared with internal migration and because of the smaller population involved in it (Shah, 2000: 121). Migrant workers from India come from eight states – Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat, Goa, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. About half of migrant workers come from Kerala (Nair, 1998:260).

Table 3. Annual outflow of labour migrants from South Asia, 1976-1997

Year	Bangladesh		India		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
	Total	% to ME	Total	% to ME	Total	% to ME	Total	% to ME
1976	6,092	91.3	4,200	na	41,690	95.7	1,200	100.0
1977	6,225	98.2	22,900	na	140,445	99.6	12,500	100.0
1978	22,809	99.7	69,000	na	129,553	99.0	17,700	100.0
1979	24,465	98.9	171,000	na	118,259	99.9	25,900	100.0
1980	33,275	97.7	236,200	na	118,397	97.9	28,600	100.0
1981	55,787	96.5	276,000	na	153,081	99.0	57,400	100.0
1982	62,805	99.0	239,545	93.6	137,353	99.8	22,500	100.0
1983	59,216	98.3	224,995	96.9	120,031	99.7	18,100	100.0
1984	56,794	98.5	205,922	96.4	93,540	99.9	15,700	na
1985	77,714	98.8	163,035	98.4	82,333	99.9	12,400	na
1986	68,704	99.0	113,649	96.1	58,002	99.6	15,800	na
1987	55,016	99.0	125,356	97.2	66,186	99.8	16,127	94.7
1988	68,570	98.3	169,844	97.7	81,545	99.8	18,973	93.8
1989	107,294	93.6	126,786	95.1	95,863	98.0	24,724	na
1990	103,814	97.4	141,816	94.2	113,781	98.0	42,624	na
1991	147,131	97.7	192,003	96.0	142,818	99.8	65,067	94.5
1992	188,103	93.2	416,784	96.7	191,506	99.7	124,494	90.3
1993	244,590	70.4	438,338	95.5	154,529	99.2	129,076	90.0
1994	186,903	72.4	425,385	95.1	114,019	98.9	130,027	85.0
1995	187,543	74.8	415,334	93.0	122,840	94.5	170,131	83.3
1996	211,620	na	414,214	93.7	127,784	93.0	162,572	85.1
1997	230,765	na	416,424	92.8	153,929	96.0	149,843	84.6

Source: IOM, 2000, p.110.

Notes: na = not available; ME = Middle East.

2000:117).⁵ The withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989 did not put an end to refugee migration from Afghanistan. Conflicts between the Taliban and rival forces created a resurgence of refugee migration in the 1990s. As at the end of 1999, there were 1.2 million Afghans in Pakistan, 1.3 million in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 14,500 in India, 12,600 in the Russian Federation and 10,000 in the other CIS countries (UNHCR, 2000:119).⁶

India and Pakistan are confronted with the problem of irregular migration involving Bangladeshis. India has attempted to solve the problem through occasional crackdowns, repatriation and the construction of a border fence. Pakistan, however, plans on holding a

⁵ During the same period, some 3,060,000 Afghans sought refuge in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Afghan refugees in Pakistan received international assistance while those in the Islamic Republic of Iran received little assistance. Note that the Islamic Revolution in 1979 severely strained relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Western powers (UNHCR, 2000:117)

⁶ Last year, the drought contributed to refugee movements from Afghanistan.

registration exercise to better monitor the situation. In recent years, trafficking in women and children has been reported from poverty-stricken areas of Bangladesh and Nepal to India (mostly for prostitution); and the trafficking of young boys from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India to be used as camel jockeys in the Middle East. Recognition of the problem and the need to address it has led to the drawing up of a draft convention (the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution) in 1997 (IOM, 2000:61).

B. East Asia

With the exception of China, East Asia is mainly a region of receiving countries, with Hong Kong, China and Japan as the forerunners, and the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China emerging as new labour markets in the 1990s. In general, East Asian destinations admit skilled workers and professionals, but are less welcoming of less skilled workers.

Hong Kong, China allows for the admission of less skilled workers through its labour supplementation scheme, the entry route for construction workers and domestic helpers. The continuing demand for foreign domestic helpers since the 1970s has made Hong Kong, China one of the major destinations of women migrants. Of the 210,000 foreign domestic helpers in the territory, Filipinos comprise 75 per cent and Indonesians 24 per cent, with the rest coming from Thailand, Sri Lanka and India (*Asian Migration News*, 15 September 2001).

Japan postponed the importation of foreign workers through relocation and upgrading. The clamor to import workers came from small- and medium-sized firms which could not afford the two other options. Then and now, Japan has maintained a policy of not accepting less skilled workers. The Government addressed the labour shortage by accepting *Nikkeijin* (descendants of Japanese emigrants to Latin America) and through the trainee programme. Irregular migrant workers filled the shortfall. Japan's discovery of the migrant presence prompted it to revise its immigration law in 1990, but not the policy about unskilled workers. The sluggish economy in the 1990s dampened the demand for unskilled workers. In 2000, Japan toughened its policies against overstayers. Japan accepts entertainers, who are classified under the skilled and professional category. The two major source countries of entertainers are the Philippines (both legal and irregular) and Thailand (mostly irregular). While there has been a notable decline in the number of irregular migrants in the country, the demand for entertainers has been stable, even through the 1997-1998 crisis. Aside from the legal route, entertainers are brought in through irregular channels, including trafficking in women. Although Japan is not a country of immigration, some permanent settlement is taking place via marriages between Japanese nationals and foreigners. International

marriages in Japan were mostly between Japanese women and foreign men, until 1975, when more and more Japanese men married women from other Asian countries. The long-term settlement and community formation of some groups in Japan challenge the notion of a homogeneous Japanese society (see *APMJ*, 2000).

The Republic of Korea's rise to NIC status propelled its transition from a labour-exporting to a labour-importing country in a short period of time. The Republic of Korea adopted Japan's approach to migration: no to unskilled workers and resorting to the trainee programme in response to a labour shortage in small- and medium-sized firms. **As in Japan, the trainee programme was inadequate in meeting the labour demand, and irregular foreign workers filled the cracks.** Between 1995 and 2000, the latter's share among the foreign worker population runs from 60 to 65 per cent (table 2). Several amnesty programmes had been carried out in the Republic of Korea, but irregular migration has not subsided. The proposal to shift to a work permit system was pursued in 2000, but its implementation has been stalled owing to resistance from the Korean Federation of Small Business.

Taiwan Province of China crafted a migration policy that recognizes the need for less skilled workers in the construction, manufacturing and household sectors. To ensure that migrant workers do not stay, migrant workers can only work in Taiwan Province of China for a maximum of three years, without any extension or renewal thereafter. Taiwan Province of China was not as badly affected during the 1997-1998 crisis, but it did not remain immune to economic vagaries. The United States-led economic slowdown which started last year, particularly the slump in the demand for electronic goods, has Taiwan Province of China's economy floundering. Unemployment has grown to 4.9 per cent and forecasts for economic growth this year range from -0.37 per cent to -2.4 per cent (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 September 2001).⁷ At present, there are discussions to cut down on workers' wages (including migrant workers'), even if it means backing down from the conventions Taiwan Province of China has signed. Already, there have been negotiations with the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia to reduce the brokers' fees, but accommodation costs (which were shouldered by employers) will be deducted from the workers' salaries (*Asian Migration News*, 31 July 2001).

China encourages labour export as a means to reduce unemployment pressures, but it has figured more in international migration because of the much-publicized cases of smuggling of Chinese to other countries in East Asia and to distant countries in North America and Europe. Originating mostly from the province of Fujian, elaborate networks

⁷ Other Asian countries that invested heavily in high-technology electronics were also badly affected by the slump in global demand: Singapore; the Republic of Korea; Hong Kong, China; and Malaysia (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 September 2001).

of organized crime syndicates have blazed different routes to sneak migrants to Western countries. Aside from exorbitant fees, migrants could be subjected to various forms of risks, abuses and violence during passage or continued subjection once they arrive at the destination. Although China is not (yet) a major country of origin of migrant workers, its 824-million-strong working age population (as of 1995, as cited in Hugo, 1998), poses stiff competition for other labour exporters. Also, the competition China could wage in terms of offering the lowest production costs could be an alternative to importing labour. Both scenarios have implications for narrowing the migration opportunities of other countries of origin in the region.

C. South-East Asia

South-East Asia is a vibrant mix of countries of destination (Singapore and Brunei Darussalam), countries that send and receive workers (Malaysia and Thailand) and countries of origin (Philippines, Indonesia, Burma, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam).

Among the countries of destination, Singapore had a migration framework before large numbers of foreign workers arrived in the city-State. It acknowledged that it needs less skilled labour, but it is also bent on reducing its dependence on foreign labour. Singapore has managed labour migration based on a system of quotas and levies. It is actively seeking foreign talent, which it sees as essential to maintain its competitiveness. During the 1997-1998 crisis, Singapore was unique in its approach to migrant workers: it did not favour or protect local workers but instead adhered to a merit system in the event of a retrenchment. This was a departure from its policy during the 1985 recession, when it retrenched migrant workers to protect local workers.

Malaysia and Thailand evolved policies on labour migration when large numbers of migrant workers were already present in their labour markets. Both countries underwent industrial transformation during the 1980s (punctuated by a severe recessionary period in 1985-1986) and the early 1990s, thanks to export-led industrialization and the infusion of foreign direct investment. This resulted in an increasing share of manufacturing and services in GDP and employment. High economic growth and high employment growth required workers which their labour markets could not provide. This was particularly problematic for Malaysia, given its small population. In both countries, the agriculture sector was the first to experience labour shortage, and later on this spread to the manufacturing sector as well. Migrant workers from neighbouring countries (Indonesia in the case of Malaysia; mostly Burma in the case of Thailand) filled the need for workers in the agriculture, service and construction sectors. Their proximity to neighbouring low-wage countries greatly facilitated the unauthorized movement of labour. Their numbers swelled

to problematic proportions (table 2).⁸ Several regularization/amnesty exercises were carried out and they also resorted to crackdowns, border controls, sanctions on immigration violators (including immigrants, employers, transporters and harbourers) and repatriation. Irregular migration did not abate despite these measures. Thailand recently admitted that these measures had not been effective and has decided to adopt a work permit system. Employers and irregular migrant workers were given until 29 September 2001 to register foreign workers. The change was expected to enable the Government to monitor migrant workers in the country and provide better protection to workers. Malaysia, however, will have to design a more consistent, long-term migration policy that is linked to an economic restructuring programme in a planned effort to phase out labour importation (Pillai, 1995:234).

Another hub of significant cross-border flows is the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA). Formed in 1995, this newest growth area is preceded by a long history of trade and population flows between the contiguous areas.⁹ Oil-rich but labour-short Brunei Darussalam attracts migrants – professionals and less skilled alike – from Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. Most of it is regular migration. The other magnet is Sabah, which is grappling with irregular migration from the Philippines and Indonesia. The various estimates of the foreign population in Sabah reflect the difficulty of ascertaining their number. According to official sources, in 1999 there were 600,000 foreigners in Sabah, of whom 100,000 were in an irregular situation. The opposition party, however, estimated there could be a million irregular migrants in the state (Asis, 2000:19).¹⁰ Sabah has also tried regularization, crackdowns, sanctions against immigration violators and repatriation, but irregular migration continues. Sabah's plantation, construction and service sectors draw heavily on migrant labour as locals have shunned work in these sectors. Labour migration in Sabah has become a political issue as well. According to the opposition party, Umno brings in migrants during elections. Concerns about growing criminality and competition between migrants and locals in the use of social services have fuelled negative perceptions regarding migrant workers.

⁸ As of August 2001, irregular migrants in Malaysia number 600,000 (450,000 in Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak; 150,000 in Sabah) while in Thailand the estimates range from 500,000 to a million (*Migration News*, September 2001).

⁹ Except for Brunei Darussalam, the rest are subregions of the three other members: West Kalimantan in Indonesia, Sabah in Malaysia and Mindanao in the Philippines. The crisis stalled the initiatives began at the launching of BIMP-EAGA. The kidnapping of tourists and staff members in Sipadan, Sabah in 2000 raised security concerns in the subregion, casting gloom over the ecotourism prospects of the area.

¹⁰ Estimates of the Filipino population in Sabah vary depending on the source. Filipinos who sought refuge in Sabah in the 1970s number between 65,000 and 130,000. As of 2000, Filipino and Malaysian officials estimate the Filipino population in Sabah at 500,000 (Asis, 2000:19). See also note 8.

The rest of South-East Asia – the more populous and the less economically dynamic countries – are long-standing countries of origin (such as the Philippines and Indonesia) or are beginning to promote labour export (such as Viet Nam).¹¹ International migration from Burma, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Cambodia consists mostly of cross-border flows into Thailand, most of which are unauthorized. Particularly in the case of Burma, the migration to Thailand involves refugees and economically motivated migrants. The active participation of the Government in labour export is most evident in the case of the Philippines and Indonesia. Among the countries of origin in Asia, the Philippines sends the largest number of workers abroad, workers of varying skill levels, and to more destinations the world over (table 4). By contrast, labour migration from Indonesia is mostly unskilled and is directed mainly to neighbouring Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, and more recently, Hong Kong, China and Taiwan Province of China. Since the 1990s, women make up the majority of migrant workers legally deployed from the Philippines and Indonesia, most of whom work as domestic helpers (also entertainers in the case of the Philippines). The Philippine Government initially focused on marketing its workers, but it later included programmes and services promoting the welfare and protection of migrants. These programmes and initiatives, covering pre-migration, on-site and return and reintegration issues, serve as examples of good practices for consideration by other countries of origin.

Table 4. Deployed Filipino overseas workers, 1990-2000

	<i>Land-based</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Sea-based</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>New hires</i>	<i>Rehires</i>			
1990	217,942	116,941	334,883	111,212	446,095
1991	301,317	184,943	486,260	125,759	612,019
1992	291,219	258,346	549,565	136,806	686,371
1993	274,305	276,567	550,872	145,758	696,630
1994	268,711	296,515	565,226	154,376	719,602
1995	219,018	269,603	488,621	165,401	654,022
1996	206,734	277,919	484,653	175,469	660,122
1997	222,139	337,088	559,227	188,469	747,696
1998	223,589	338,795	562,384	193,300	755,684
1998 ^a	223,589	414,754	638,343	193,300	831,643
1999 ^a	237,714	402,617	640,331	196,689	837,020
2000 ^a	253,030	390,274	643,304	198,324	841,628
2001 ^b			365,563	99,161	464,724

^a Data from Labor Assistance Center on actual departures from airport.

^b From January to June only.

¹¹ Viet Nam used to send workers to Eastern Europe, but since the collapse of the Soviet Union, it has refocused the deployment of workers to Asia. It expects to send some 50,000 workers abroad for the period 2000-2005 (Dang, 2000).

Economic growth in the 1990s halted labour migration from Thailand, but it was encouraged by the Government when the crisis hit in 1997. Other Asian countries are the major destinations of Thai workers, and in Taiwan Province of China, Thais have been the largest group since the 1990s. Malaysia is also a country of origin, but Malaysians have not migrated in large numbers to distant destinations. Malaysians migrate to work in Singapore. The most recent and supposedly most complete data on the number of Malaysians in Singapore cite a figure of 200,000, including some 30,000 who commute to Singapore daily (*Asian Migration News*, 15 August 2001).

Labour migration is only one of many forms of population movements in the area. Refugee migration in South-East Asia did not end with the conclusion of the massive Indo-Chinese refugee crisis in 1989.¹² Some are temporary (e.g., the intermittent refugee flows from Cambodia to Thailand in 1997); some are protracted (e.g., the case of some 100,000 Burmese refugees in Thailand). A recent case is that of East Timor, where some 500,000 people were displaced in the violence that ensued in the days before and following the vote for independence in 1999. Some 250,000 were internally displaced in East Timor while some 290,000 fled to West Timor (UNHCR, 2000:237). Repatriation efforts were undertaken, but many more remained in West Timor than chose to return to East Timor: of 53,824 families, 98 per cent opted to remain in Indonesia (*Asian Migration News*, 30 June 2001).

D. North and Central Asia

This region witnessed extensive population movements in the 1990s driven by a combination of political and economic factors. The disintegration of the USSR (December 1991) spurred armed conflicts (mainly in the Central and Eastern European or CEE side) and the realignment of borders, which led to population displacement. In the republics that came to be known as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the largest population movements involved the relocation of those living outside their home republics during the breakup of the USSR. Since 1989, about 9 million people have moved, voluntarily or forcedly, within or between the countries of the CIS. This translates to 1 in every 30 of the region's inhabitants (Laczko, 2000:164). The nationalist policies initiated by the new republics (e.g., the use of the national language) threatened the future prospects of the Russian-speaking population, prompting their exodus. Between 1991 and 1997, "migration from the five Central Asian states has added 2.2 million to the Russian population."¹³ Migration from Kazakhstan – at 200,000 to 300,000 per year – accounts for the largest

¹² The communist takeover in Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos in 1975 resulted in the flight of more than three million people in the next two decades – some 2.5 million were resettled while half a million returned (UNHCR, 2000:102).

¹³ Laczko (2000:167) estimates the number of repatriants from the CEE/CIS between 1990 and 1997 at 2.7 million.

contingent and has provoked a haemorrhaging of entire sectors of the economy (industry, transport etc)” (Jean Radvanyi in Capisani, 2000:viii). About 2.5 million people emigrated to the West from the CEE/CIS region during the first half of the 1990s, mostly minority ethnic groups; economically migration was also significant (Laczko, 2000:171-2).

The breakup of the Soviet Union loosened border control, and the CEE/CIS became a destination as well as a transit point for immigrants seeking entry to Western Europe. There is paucity of data on migration and many population movements are not captured. Some 700,000 to 1.5 million persons are estimated to be working in the CIS without work permits. There are also indications that the region is being used as a transit point for irregular migration, including the trafficking of women from Central and Eastern Europe. According to a United States report, in 1997 some 175,000 women and girls from CEE and CIS were trafficked, one fourth of all women trafficked worldwide (Laczko, 2000: 182). The CIS’ proximity to conflict-torn areas also makes it a place of refuge. The CIS hosted some 100,000 asylum seekers from non-CIS countries in 1997, most of them from Afghanistan (Laczko, 2000).

For the Russian Federation, the most important movement since the breakup is the return of ethnic Russians and other Russian speakers. In addition, the Russian Federation is also a destination for labour migrants from Ukraine, Turkey, China and the former Yugoslavia (Laczko, 2000: 167).

E. Pacific

Australia and New Zealand are the only countries in the Asia-Pacific region that offer the possibility for permanent immigration. Asia became the top source region of immigrants to these two countries with the dismantling of migration policies that traditionally favoured Europeans in the 1970s (Australia) and in 1986 (New Zealand). Immigration criteria in both countries are based on family, skills and humanitarian considerations. Immigrants with capital can also qualify under business investment programmes. In Australia, amendments were introduced in 1996 to make the process more selective; hence skills and English language proficiency were emphasized and access to welfare support was limited. New Zealand also implemented more selective measures in 1995 after immigration had increased in the 1990s, particularly from “non-traditional” sources (i.e., mainly from East Asia).¹⁴ Both countries allow temporary work arrangements for certain skills. There is also a significant population exchange between the two countries, with Australia receiving more inflows from New Zealand.

¹⁴ In October 1995, immigrants aged 16 and over from non-English-speaking backgrounds (except refugees and those admitted for humanitarian considerations) were required to deposit \$NZ 20,000, which they could refund after passing a test within three months of entry. It could be forfeited if the immigrant did not qualify for a specified level of English within a year.

The large numbers of Asian arrivals generated some backlash in Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, Pauline Hanson's anti-Asian stance during the 1998 deliberation of immigration places was quelled by a reaffirmation of the country's policy on multiculturalism. New Zealand media discussed the "invasion" of recent Asian immigrants, who tended to congregate in Auckland and bought up properties, putting them out of the reach of local buyers. Questions were also raised concerning the commitment of new immigrants to New Zealand given their tendency to commute between New Zealand and their home countries. A recent concern in New Zealand is the loss of skilled migrants (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard, 2001).

The issue of irregular migration has stirred much debate in Australia with the growing number of boat people arriving in the country, who then claim refugee status. In 1998 and 1999, 292 boats carrying 926 people were intercepted (Battistella, 2000:271). Some 4,600 boat people arrived in Australia on 56 vessels in 14 months (CNN, 14 August 2001). From 1989 to 1998, most of the boat people were Chinese and Sino-Vietnamese (Battistella, 2000: 271). Most of the recent arrivals are of Middle Eastern origin – from Afghanistan, Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Distinguishing between irregular migrants who may abuse the asylum channel and bona fide refugees prompted the Government to adopt measures to discourage irregular migration. The Border Protection Legislation Amendment Bill was adopted. One of the provisions denies entry to asylum seekers if, before reaching Australia, they had travelled through another country in which they could have received asylum (i.e., a signatory to the Geneva Convention) (Battistella, 2000: 271). Australia also imposed mandatory detention for new arrivals while their claims for asylum are under review, a move that invited much criticism.¹⁵ More changes are forthcoming, with the proposals to tighten the definition of who qualifies as a refugee in Australia, restricting the definition of persecution, expanded ministerial powers, the request to take an oath and documentation rules (*The Age*, 13 August 2001; CNN, 14 August 2001).¹⁶

¹⁵ Of 3,000 immigration detainees, 1,238 are awaiting decisions on applications, 494 are appealing to tribunals or the courts, while others are awaiting deportation (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 August 2001). Offshore refugees and asylum seekers arriving unlawfully also have different benefits. Refugees who apply lawfully from overseas and are taken under the humanitarian programme are given permanent residency, free housing and free English lessons while they settle in, and have their airfares covered. Asylum seekers arriving unlawfully can only apply for three-year temporary protection visas. They do not have access to housing, they do not receive free English lessons and they cannot use the family reunion scheme to get their families into Australia (*The Age*, 3 August 2001).

¹⁶ The proposed definition of persecution is expected to include "the elements of threat to life or liberty, or significant physical harassment or ill-treatment, or significant economic hardship that threatens a person's capacity to subsist, where the persecution feared is part of a systematic or discriminatory conduct against a person" (*The Age*, 13 August 2001).

The rest of the 19 island States in Oceania are countries where permanent and labour migration have taken place since the 1970s. In the mid-1990s, some 400,000 Pacific islanders lived in New Zealand (170,000), the United States (145,000), Australia (84,000) and Canada (16,700). Among the Pacific islanders, Polynesians are the most involved in international migration, with some 75 per cent living abroad; Melanesians are engaged mostly in internal migration while Micronesians engage in both international and internal migration (Battistella, 2000:283). The role of remittances in the Pacific islands has received much comment. According to research findings, remittances have not been just channelled to consumption, but also to productive investments. While it is recognized that emigration serves as a safety net, particularly in the Polynesian States of Tonga and Western Samoa, questions have also been raised as to how long this option will be available (Cole, 1994:1).

Many of the distinctive characteristics of international migration observed in Asia in the 1990s still resonate today: the unwavering policy to keep migration temporary, government involvement (in promoting it in the case of countries of origin or limiting/regulating it in the case of countries of destination), the active role of the migrant industry, sustained female migration and the continuing concentration of women in vulnerable sectors, and the substantial share of irregular migration throughout the region (table 2). A specific form of irregular migration, trafficking in persons, especially women and children, has become pervasive throughout the region. Table 5 summarizes how different countries are involved in trafficking in persons at origin, in transit or at destination, a profile of the victims, and the purposes for which trafficked persons are used.

Irregular migration, particularly trafficking in women and children, challenges the ideal of humane and orderly migration. It is a profitable business for those who facilitate it, but it could pose serious risks and entail human rights violations for migrants and victims of trafficking. Governments and different bodies have rallied around the issues of irregular migration and trafficking because of concerns about borders, public order and public health. A fundamental issue – the protection of human rights – is an angle that cause-oriented bodies have advanced. The conditions under which irregular migrants and victims of trafficking travel and their working and living conditions subject them to life-threatening risks and exploitation. The shared concern of Governments to curb irregular migration and trafficking paved the way for a more regional approach to migration. Two regional conferences at Bangkok (1999) and Manila (2000) drafted a regional plan of action to combat irregular migration and trafficking (Bangkok Declaration 1999 and the Asian Regional Initiative against Trafficking 2000). International cooperation on trafficking is expected to be strengthened with the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly (November 2000) of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Eighty-one countries signed the Protocol in December 2000 (United States Department of State, 2001:8).

Table 5. Asian countries or areas involved in trafficking in persons in Asia

Country or area	Tier	Migration status	Victims	Purpose	Destination/source
Hong Kong, China	1	Transit			
Taiwan Prov. of China	1	Destination			
Bangladesh	2	Source	Women and girls	Sexual exploitation	India, Pakistan, Middle East
			Boys	Camel jockeys	Middle East
Cambodia	2	Source	Men, women and children	Sexual exploitation	Thailand
				Bonded labour, street begging	
		Transit			
		Destination	Women and girls	Sexual exploitation	Viet Nam
					Internal trafficking is also taking place.
China	2	Source		Sexual exploitation and indentured labour	Malaysia, Burma, Japan, North America, Australia, Philippines
		Destination		Sexual exploitation or arranged marriages	Burma, Dem. People's Rep. of Korea, Viet Nam, Lao People's Dem. Rep., Russian Federation
					Internal trafficking is significant.
India	2	Source	Women and children		Asia, Middle East
		Transit	Women and girls	Sexual exploitation	West, Pakistan
			Boys	Camel jockeys	Middle East
		Destination	Women and children	Sexual exploitation	Bangladesh, Nepal
					Internal trafficking of women and children is widespread.

(continued)

Table 5. (continued)

Country or area	Tier	Migration status	Victims	Purpose	Destination/source
Japan	2	Destination Transit	Women	Sexual exploitation	Thailand, Philippines, Commonwealth of Independent States
Kyrgyzstan	2	Source	Men, women, children	Sexual exploitation	Russian Federation, Turkey, Germany
			Men	Forced labour	Kazakhstan
Lao People's Democratic Republic	2	Source	Women, some men	Indentured work situations, mainly for prostitution or in sweatshops	Thailand, some to China
			Women and children	Sexual exploitation Forced labour	India, some to Hong Kong, China, Thailand; and Middle East
Philippines	2	Source Transit	Women and girls	Sexual exploitation	Japan, other countries
			Mainland Chinese nationals	Sexual exploitation	Worldwide destinations Some internal trafficking takes place.
Singapore	2	Destination	Women	Sexual exploitation	India, also some from Thailand, China, Sri Lanka and Indonesia
Sri Lanka	2	Source	Women	Domestic servitude Sexual exploitation	Middle East
			Women	Sexual exploitation	Thailand, China, Russian Federation There is also internal trafficking, including holding children against their will for forced labour and forced military conscription (by LTTE).

(continued)

Table 5. (continued)

Country or area	Tier	Migration status	Victims	Purpose	Destination/source
Thailand	2	Source	Women	Sexual exploitation Sweatshop labour (some)	Japan, Taiwan Province of China, Australia, Europe, United States From China to other developed countries
		Transit			
		Destination	Women and girls	Sexual exploitation	Burma, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic There is also internal trafficking.
Viet Nam	2	Source	Women	Sexual exploitation, arranged marriages	Cambodia and China From other countries to various destinations
		Transit	Women		There is also internal trafficking.
Burma	3	Source	Women and girls	Factory workers Domestic service Sexual exploitation	Thailand There is also internal trafficking of women and girls for prostitution.
		Transit			
Indonesia	3	Source	Women and girls	Sexual exploitation Forced labour	Hong Kong, China; Singapore; Taiwan Province of China; Malaysia; Brunei Darussalam; Middle East; Australia; Republic of Korea; Japan Alien smuggling to Australia from China, Viet Nam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Internal trafficking occurs.
		Transit			(continued)

Table 5. (continued)

Country or area	Tier	Migration status	Victims	Purpose	Destination/source
Kazakhstan	3	Source	Women	Sexual exploitation	UAE, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Republic of Korea
		Transit			
Malaysia	3	Source	Women (small numbers)	Sexual exploitation	Japan, Canada, United States, Taiwan Province of China
		Destination	Women	Sexual exploitation	Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines
Pakistan	3	Source	Women and children	Sexual exploitation Bonded labour Domestic servitude	Middle East
		Transit	Boys Women and children	Camel jockeys	Middle East
		Destination	Women		From East Asia and Bangladesh to the Middle East Bangladesh, Burma, Afghanistan, CIS There is also internal trafficking
Republic of Korea	3	Origin	Women	Sexual exploitation	United States, West, Japan
		Transit	Mainly Chinese women		United States and others
Russian Federation	3	Source	Women	Sexual exploitation	Western Europe, to a lesser extent the Middle East, North America and Western Asia There is also internal trafficking

Source: United States State Department report, July (2001)

Notes: Countries are included in the report because they have a significant number of victims. Tier 1 countries are those which fully comply with the minimum standards of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 – they criminalize and prosecute trafficking and provide a range of protective services to victims. Tier 2 countries do not yet fully comply with the Act's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to do so. Tier 3 countries do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

II. INITIATING AND SUSTAINING INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

A. Factors that initiate migration

Theorizing about migration (specifically labour migration) has focused on the questions of why migration occurs and why it continues. For the longest time, the field has been dominated by neoclassical economics (also called equilibrium theory) – push-pull factors and rational choice theory. Other perspectives have developed which provide competing explanations regarding migration: the new economics of labour migration, segmented labour market theory and world systems theory were advanced to answer the first question, and the social capital theory and cumulative causation look into the continuation of migration (Massey and others, 1998). Each of these perspectives illuminates specific aspects of migration, but each one by itself cannot provide a sufficient explanation of the causes of migration.

A review of migration studies in the Asia-Pacific region found that existing research has been generally atheoretical, a situation arising from lack of data (Massey and others, 1998: 170). Although these studies may not be oriented to evaluating specific theoretical propositions, the different perspectives are implied in the framing of research questions and data analysis.

Neoclassical economics informs much of the research looking into the causes of migration (Massey and others, 1998:171). Income and wage differentials are widely accepted as a principal underlying cause of international migration in the Asia-Pacific region and are the starting point of many descriptive studies (Massey and others, 1998: 172). The data presented in tables 6 and 7 provide some intuitive support for the basic premises of neoclassical thinking: countries of origin are generally characterized by large populations, high population growth rates and low levels of development compared with countries of destination. In tandem with the new economics of labour migration, studies find that families and households consider migration in order to minimize the risks of no or limited income or to accumulate capital.¹⁷ Findings also support a basic premise of neoclassical economics: that individuals migrate to accumulate capital. However, the limitations of neoclassical economics are also evident in the region: as elsewhere, the poorest countries, the poorest families and the poorest individuals are not the ones most likely to migrate.

¹⁷ The new economics of migration holds that migration is a household rather than an individual-level decision. It recognizes that families and households in developing countries are vulnerable not just to failures in the labour market but in other markets as well.

Table 6. Development indicators for selected Asia-Pacific countries

	<i>HDI 1998</i> (1)	<i>GNP/capita</i>		<i>GDP</i> <i>1980-97</i> (4)
		<i>1997\$PPP</i> (2)	<i>1997\$currency</i> (3)	
ASIA	–	4,713	2,728	4.4
Origin ^a				
Bangladesh	0.461	1,090	360	4.6
Indonesia	0.670	3,390	1,110	6.7
Pakistan	0.522	1,580	500	5.4
Philippines	0.744	3,670	1,200	2.3
Sri Lanka	0.733	2,460	800	4.6
Viet Nam	0.671	1,590	310	4.9
Other Origin ^b				
Burma	0.585	1,130	–	3.1
Cambodia	0.512	1,290	300	2.1
China	0.706	3,070	860	10.0
India	0.563	1,660	370	5.7
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.484	1,300	400	5.8
Nepal	0.474	1,090	220	4.8
Origin and Destination				
Malaysia	0.772	7,730	4,530	6.9
Thailand	0.745	6,490	2,740	7.4
Destination				
Brunei Darussalam	0.848	31,165	–	–0.1
Hong Kong, China	0.872	24,350	25,200	6.1
Japan	0.924	24,400	38,160	3.0
Republic of Korea	0.854	13,430	10,550	8.2
Singapore	0.881	29,230	32,180	7.7
OCEANIA		15,461	15,819	2.8
Origin				
Fiji	0.769	6,159	2,470	2.1
Guam	–	–	–	–
Papua New Guinea	0.542	2,500	930	2.3
Solomon Islands	0.614	2,230	900	5.6
Destination (Permanent)				
Australia	0.929	19,510	20,650	3.0
New Zealand	0.903	15,780	15,830	2.0

Sources: Data for column 1 came from Population & Development Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, 2001 (www.unescap.org/pop/data_sheet/2001/table6.htm). Data for columns 2-4 came from Table 5 of the World Labour Report 2000 (ILO, 2000).

Notes: ^a Countries of origin where the government plays an active role in labor migration.
^b Countries of origin where government involvement is less active.

Table 7. Demographic and employment-related indicators for selected Asia-Pacific countries

	Total population mid-2001 (000s)		Annual growth rate (%)		Projected population 2025		Dependency ratio			Labour force participation rate of 15-64		Labour force growth rate 1980-1997		Total unemployment rates			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	
ASIA ^a	3,781,169	1.2	4,726,822	55.8	48.3	48.8	74.8	74.4	2.0	2.9	3.2	3.3					
Origin ^b																	
Bangladesh	140,369	2.1	210,823	62.2	53.7	42.2	77.7	79.6	2.5	1.9	—	2.5					
Indonesia	214,840	1.3	272,911	54.6	47.6	46.9	71.2	74.5	2.8	1.7	2.1	4.1					
Pakistan	142,326	2.4	250,981	81.9	69.4	49.0	62.9	65.9	3.4	6.3	5.4	—					
Philippines	77,131	1.9	107,073	67.6	57.1	46.6	67.3	68.8	2.6	8.1	8.4	7.9					
Sri Lanka	19,104	1.0	22,529	48.7	46.1	50.8	63.5	66.4	2.1	14.4	12.5	11.3					
Viet Nam	79,175	1.3	105,488	62.6	45.6	47.2	81.2	78.1	2.4	—	—	—					
Other Origin ^c																	
Burma	48,364	1.3	60,243	48.6	43.7	45.3	78.9	78.8	2.1	—	—	—					
Cambodia	13,441	2.5	22,310	78.5	63.2	49.2	85.5	85.0	2.6	—	—	—					
China	1,284,972	0.8	1,470,787	46.4	39.7	49.3	84.9	82.6	1.7	2.5	2.9	3.0					
India	1,025,096	1.6	1,351,801	62.0	51.3	47.0	66.6	67.2	2.0	—	—	—					
Lao People's Democratic Republic	5,403	2.3	8,721	89.6	78.8	59.7	83.8	83.4	2.5	—	—	—					
Nepal	23,593	2.3	38,706	80.3	68.1	46.9	72.3	72.2	2.4	—	—	—					
Origin and Destination																	
Malaysia	23,639	2.0	31,326	61.7	50.7	51.0	66.0	67.9	2.8	5.1	2.9	2.5					
Thailand	62,968	1.0	65,299	45.0	40.9	48.8	84.0	83.6	2.1	2.2	1.1	0.9					
Destination																	
Brunei	346	2.3	473	55.2	43.3	57.1	67.5	68.4	3.7	—	—	—					
Darussalam																	
Hong Kong, China	6,879	1.1	8,762	38.5	35.2	63.4	71.7	70.2	1.5	1.3	3.2	2.2					

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

	Total population mid-2001 (000s)		Annual growth rate (%)		Projected population		Dependency ratio			Labour force participation rate of 15-64		Labour force growth rate		Total unemployment rates												
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)										
Japan	127,100	0.2	120,913	46.8	57.0	68.7	73.3	75.3	0.9	2.1	3.2	3.4	47,676	0.8	52,541	39.3	41.0	53.3	68.9	72.4	2.2	2.4	2.0	2.6		
Republic of Korea	4,148	3.2	4,998	45.0	40.9	48.8	69.7	64.9	2.4	1.9	2.7	2.4	4,148	3.2	4,998	45.0	40.9	48.8	69.7	64.9	2.4	1.9	2.7	2.4		
OCEANIA				53.9	51.6	56.7	75.3	74.8	1.9	7.1	7.8	8.1														
Origin																										
Fiji	823	1.1	954	56.0	50.9	49.7	61.0	67.4	2.7	6.4	5.4	—														
Guam	158	1.9	242	62.3	53.5	56.1	—	—	—	2.8	5.5	—														
Papua New Guinea	4,920	2.3	8,023	71.5	64.8	45.4	78.8	78.3	2.2	—	—	—														
Solomon Islands	463	3.4	943	84.7	74.4	52.7	85.5	84.8	3.4	—	—	—														
Destination (Permanent)																										
Australia	19,388	1.2	23,523	48.7	47.3	60.8	75.2	74.4	1.8	7.0	8.1	8.4														
New Zealand	3,901	0.8	4,418	52.2	49.9	61.3	75.3	74.8	1.8	7.8	6.3	6.7														

Sources: Data for columns 1-3 came from Population and Development Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, 2001 (www.unescap.org/pop/data_sheet/2001/table1.htm). Data for columns 4-6 came from Table 2; columns 7-8, Table 4; column 9, Table 5; and columns 10-12, Table 6 of World Labour Report 2000 (ILO,2000).

- Notes:**
- a Asia in columns 1-3 refers to the ESCAP region.
 - b Countries of origin where the government plays a role in labor migration.
 - c Countries of origin where government involvement is less active.

II. Initiating and Sustaining International Migration

The segmented labour market theory links migration with the structural changes evolving in industrial societies. According to this perspective, migration is inevitable, resulting from the built-in demand for migrant workers in the secondary labour market of industrial societies. Few studies have been undertaken to test the propositions of segmented labour market theory in the region (Massey and others, 2000). However, indirect evidence – migration trends vis-à-vis industrialization in the region – suggests that migration is structural and demand-driven. The preceding discussion noted that virtually all labour-importing countries have a demand for less skilled workers (although the official policies of some countries do not recognize this). Usually this demand comes from small- and medium-sized firms, which, unlike large firms, are not in a position to go the road of high technology or to relocate overseas. In the process, the labour market bifurcates into the primary sector, which offers jobs fetching high wages and tenure, and the secondary sector, which offers low-end jobs, low wages and no security. Jobs in the primary sector attract local workers while the secondary labour market becomes the niche for migrant workers. Women's migration and their concentration in domestic services and entertainment suggest that the labour market is not only segmented but also gendered. Like other unskilled work, the migration of female domestic helpers and entertainers is demand-driven, with a void left by local women when they take up productive work. Without significant changes in the organization of reproductive work – the work that is needed to support social life that is usually assumed by women – importing women migrants is one strategy to address the shortage (Truong, 1996). Thus, in the process of structural change, reproductive work becomes part of the 3D jobs that are passed on to migrant workers. The cheaper costs and flexibility of migrant labour, i.e., importing and repatriating workers as the economic situation warrants, are advantages that markets cannot do without. In the case of women migrant workers, the necessity of reproductive work in sustaining social life suggests a constant demand for such workers. Reproductive work is also work that requires the presence of a caregiver; hence, it cannot be fully replaced by automation or relocated. Indeed, as the experience during the crisis bears out, domestic helpers and entertainers were hardly affected by lay-offs or repatriation (Battistella and Asis, 1999).¹⁸

It used to be argued that Asian countries may have simply delayed the importation of workers (Martin, Mason and Tsay, 1995:117). The proportion of foreigners in Japan, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China did not go above 2 per cent of the total workforce, unlike the higher share of foreign workers in Western industrialized countries at a similar stage of industrialization (Abella, 1995:128). However, in order to sustain growth, Asian countries had to bring in foreign workers at some point. When they did, the proportion

¹⁸ There were indications, however, that the crisis affected their working conditions. An example was the 5 per cent reduction (the proposal was for 20 per cent) in the monthly minimum wage of foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong. Also, competition among employment agencies led to practices that incurred costs borne by women migrants – e.g., not charging employers but passing on the costs to the migrants (Battistella and Asis, 1999).

of foreign workers is substantial, exceeding even the share of foreign workers in Western countries. To cite a few examples, in Malaysia, foreign workers account for 20 per cent of the total labour force and, in Sabah, the proportion reaches 50 per cent (Kanapathy, 2001).

The region's experience during the 1997-1998 crisis also confirms the built-in demand for migrant labour in industrialized societies. The receiving countries – Malaysia, Thailand and the Republic of Korea – carried out repatriation programmes in the hope that unemployed local workers will move into the jobs vacated by migrant workers. The repatriation programmes took place and border control and other measures helped to keep out illegal entrants. However, even during a period of unemployment, local workers did not take up the jobs vacated by migrants, and some sectors experienced labour shortages. They had to modify or postpone their repatriation plans owing to labour shortages in the plantation sector in Malaysia and in the rice mill and fishing industries in Thailand. This experience underscored the fact that migrant workers and local workers do not compete with each other, i.e., they work in different sectors. Migrant workers thus complement rather than substitute for local workers.

The macro factors and processes advanced by the world systems theory do not readily lend themselves to hypotheses testing. Its fundamental propositions – (a) that the penetration of capitalism into the semi-periphery and periphery societies disrupts social and economic organization, rendering people prone to migration, and (b) that the ideological and material links between the core and periphery facilitate migration – require massive data to establish the links between capitalism and migration.¹⁹ In the Asia-Pacific region, these links have not been studied systematically and are instead suggested by circumstantial evidence that links patterns of international migration with capital penetration processes, and the formation of links between labour-surplus countries and global cities (Massey and others, 1998:183).

Globalization, however, has conflicting tendencies and contradictions. Migration is one area where the promise of a borderless world flounders. While Governments may be willing to liberalize flows of trade or capital, they are more likely to exert control on the flows of people. However, other consequences or associated processes of globalization could mean more migration because of new migration pressures (e.g., increased trade or technology diffusion could result in more displacement) or the facilitative role played by transnational communities and networks and cheaper and faster transportation.²⁰

¹⁹ The globalization of the capitalist economy began in the sixteenth century via colonization and it is in this sense that globalization is not a new phenomenon (Stalker, 2000:10). The new aspects of globalization in this era are new markets, new tools, new actors and new rules (UNDP, 1999:1). Although current usage of the term emphasizes the economic aspects, globalization also has technological, cultural and political aspects. In broad terms, it is used to refer to the integration of economies resulting from the breakdown of barriers to the flows of goods, capital, people and ideas. In the process, the significance of the nation-State is eroded in some respects as other actors or mechanisms assume its functions.

²⁰ Other contradictions globalization implies for migration are discussed in Castles (2000:124-132).

B. Factors that sustain migration

The possibility that migration will come to an end is predicted in neoclassical economics: e.g., when wage differentials disappear, or as trade theory indicates, by substituting the movement of goods with the movement of labour.²¹ The experience of several East Asian countries suggests that their transition from labour-exporting to labour-importing countries proceeded after reaching a certain level of economic development (Abella, 1995:1). Adopting an eclectic approach to turning points in migration, Fong (1994) emphasizes that a country's net migration position evolves as it develops and as it is influenced by economic, policy and institutional factors. He suggests that the path and the time it takes a country to turn into a labour-receiving country vary greatly. Further tests of these propositions are needed to generate an empirical basis regarding turning points.

Insights from social capital theory and cumulative causation help to explain why labour migration continues in the face of restrictive migration policies in receiving countries and regulation in countries of origin. These two perspectives recognize that migration is also a social process, drawing attention to the role of informal and formal institutions in increasing migration.

According to social capital theory, migrant networks (personal and social networks of migrants) and migrant institutions (migrant organizations and the migration industry) promote further migration. Migrant networks facilitate migration by linking migrants and non-migrants. Information, resources and promise of assistance and support from migrant kin and friends reduce the risks of migration and increase the possibility for migration. Over time, migrant institutions emerge, providing institutional responses to the challenges and opportunities of migration.

Migration research in Asia has found much support for the facilitative role that migrant networks play in promoting migration and in influencing the destinations and jobs migrants go to. Little research has been done on migrant organizations. However, scholars have noted that the migration industry – recruitment or placement agencies and related businesses – is one of the migration structures that promote migration (Abella, 1995:126). In countries of origin, the migration industry has become specialized in market development, matching employers and workers, and in lobbying for its own interests. In the

²¹ Does an increase in international trade or capital reduce the pressures for international migration? A review of evidence suggests that the effects on migration are diverse, depending on the time frame. In the short term, free trade and more investments may stimulate more migration. In the case of investments, even if they generate employment in the long run, the jobs created may not have a major impact on emigration (Stalker, 2000:57, 72).

Philippines, for example, there are more than a thousand placement agencies.²² They have also spawned links to related businesses – hospitals and clinics for medical clearances, travel agencies, training centres – which have an interest in encouraging and sustaining migration.

The theory of cumulative causation elaborates on the propositions of social capital theory. It recognizes the tendency of international migration to acquire a history and to be transformed in the process. Specifically it highlights the additional impetus for migration due to norms that favour migration, or the additional infrastructure created with each migration, which leads to more migration.

Research in Asia and the Pacific yields support for all theoretical models but they do not specify which factors are more powerful in initiating and perpetuating international migration (Massey and others, 1998:193). The insights from the different perspectives underscore that while international migration is influenced by economic and demographic factors, policies, institutions and human agencies play a role in migration processes. The different networks that have been established over the years – migrants' social networks, the formation of transnational communities, the transnational links of the migrant industry – and technological innovations will contribute to more population movements in the future.

²² As of March 2000, there were 791 placement agencies for land-based workers in Metro Manila, another 178 specifically handle the labour market in Taiwan Province of China and 62 placement agencies operate in the regions. There were 361 agencies which handle the deployment of seafarers. In addition, there are 312 training centres which undertake the training and preparation of overseas performing artists (OPAs) or entertainers (Asis, 2001:29).

III. CONSEQUENCES OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

The impacts of international migration have been the subject of much speculation, but research in this area is uneven and generally inconclusive.

In the countries of destination, migrants are generally regarded negatively or ignored. Migrants have been blamed for or are feared to cause various problems: rise in crime, spread of diseases, taking away jobs from locals or driving down the wages of local workers. In the case of foreign domestic helpers, their influence on the young has been a cause for concern (e.g., in Singapore). The media's tendency to focus on migrants arrested for migration violations or problems they encountered add to the perception of migration as a problem-ridden issue.

Studies, however, suggest a different picture. In Malaysia, labour market studies indicate that the presence of foreign workers has had no depressing impact on the wages of local workers (Kanapathy, 2001). In Singapore, the evidence is more mixed when the macro vs. sectoral impacts are considered. However, it is recognized that without the inflow of foreign workers, Singapore's growth (which averaged 7.9 per cent between 1990 and 1998) would not have been possible. Nevertheless, there were also some indications of less positive impacts in other areas (e.g., negative productivity growth in the construction industry, increased social inequality because of lower wages in the less skilled sectors, rising property prices due to foreign-induced demand, retrenchment of less educated and older workers), but Singapore has responded to these problems through policy interventions (Hui, 2001). Data from Singapore also suggest that increased female labour force participation has been made possible by inflows of foreign domestic helpers. A survey among working women found that 29 per cent said that they would have to quit their jobs if foreign maids were not allowed or were repatriated. Among the reasons cited by employers were: locals are not willing to work as full-time maids, foreign domestic helpers are essential for housework, childcare and taking care of aged parents, and Singapore's human resources should be maximized (Yeoh, Huang and Gonzales, 1999: 120-121). Survey respondents also acknowledged that the presence of foreign domestic helpers enabled them to spend more time with their families (Yeoh, Huang and Gonzales, 1999). In Taiwan Province of China, there is some evidence that use of foreign workers in manufacturing, construction and personal/social services increases the unemployment rate of the local labour force (Tsay and Lin, 2001:316).

Further research would help to clarify the various impacts of labour migration on receiving societies, which could then serve as the basis for more realistic policies concerning labour migration.²³

²³ Migrant scapegoating was intense during the crisis. Public opinion rather than labour market realities guided government action, with adverse outcomes (Battistella and Asis, 1999).

Among the countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Australia is an exception because of the availability of migration data, an important resource for generating research-based information. Research in Australia reveals that immigration has had a positive impact on Australian society. The findings confirmed that Australia's economy and social cohesion have not been adversely affected by immigration (Battistella, 2000:276-277).

The issue of migration impacts has received considerable attention in the countries of origin. Research on the economic consequences of migration indicates that there are some benefits. Migrant workers' remittances loom significantly in the cost-benefit analysis of migration. Table 8 summarizes the volume of remittances channelled through the banking system in selected labour-exporting countries.²⁴ As a proportion of merchandise exports, remittances were equivalent to about 44 per cent in Bangladesh (in 1993), 13 per cent in India (in 1990), 24 per cent in Pakistan (in 1993) and 22 per cent in the Philippines (in 1993) (Puri and Ritzema, 1999: 3). The same report cites a finding from the Asian Development Bank that in 1995 Asian countries received US\$ 75 billion from workers' remittances compared with US\$ 54 billion in official foreign aid.

There are two opposing views on the macro implications of remittances, supported by studies. On the one hand, remittances are said to provide a significant source of foreign currency, increase national income, finance imports and contribute to the balance of payments. On the other hand, there are concerns that remittances could result in more dependence on migration and reduce the likelihood of investment by the Government or foreign investors because of labour outflows. There are also indications that remittances increase inequality.

Studies in the countries of origin converge on the micro uses of remittances. At the level of households, remittances are generally used for basic subsistence needs (food, clothing, health care) and for constructing/renovating housing, buying land or cattle or buying consumer durable goods (Puri and Ritzema, 1999: 10). According to one view, these are not "productive investments," i.e., income- and employment-generating activities, or a business or other activities with multiplier effects. An alternative view suggests that such uses are rational, particularly considering the structural constraints for investments. Puri and Ritzema conclude that migrants use remittances rationally.

Attempts by government to influence the use of remittances – facilities to allow migrants to import machinery and equipment at concessional rates of duty, business counselling and training, and entrepreneurship programmes – have led to inconclusive

²⁴ It is generally recognized that the true volume of remittances would be much higher if unrecorded flows were included. In the Philippines, remittances through unofficial channels account for 42 per cent of total remittances. The corresponding shares in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka range from 10 to 15 per cent (Puri and Ritzema, 1999:5).

III. Consequences of International Migration

outcomes (Puri and Ritzema, 1999: 16-17). One suggestion is to explore the role of micro finance institutions in linking unrecorded remittances to development and the potential of migrants' savings as mutual and pension funds (Puri and Ritzema, 1999: 19).

Table 8. Level of total remittances: selected Asian countries^a (Millions of US dollars)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Bangladesh</i>	<i>India</i>	<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>Sri Lanka</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Philippines</i>
1975	–	430	–	9	–	–
1976	19	642	410	13	–	–
1977	79	934	868	18	–	338
1978	115	1,165	1,303	39	–	445
1979	171	1,437	1,495	60	–	556
1980	339	2,757	2,038	152	–	626
1981	381	2,301	2,057	230	–	800
1982	526	2,618	2,576	289	–	1,049
1983	642	2,660	2,926	294	10	1,124
1984	501	2,295	2,569	301	53	718
1985	502	2,469	2,525	292	61	805
1986	576	2,240	2,435	326	71	859
1987	748	2,665	2,170	350	86	1,020
1988	764	2,315	1,863	358	99	1,262
1989	758	2,614	2,008	358	167	1,362
1990	779	2,384	1,997	401	166	1,465
1991	769	3,289	1,541	442	130	1,850
1992	912	2,897	1,566	548	229	2,537
1993	1,007	3,522	1,446	632	346	2,587
1994	1,151	5,857	1,749	715	449	3,452
1995	1,202	6,223	1,712	801	651	5,360
1996	1,345	8,766	1,284	843	796	4,875
1997	1,527	10,331	1,707	934	725	6,799
1998	1,606	9,480	0	1,011	959	5,130
1999	1,807	11,124	0	1,068	1,109	6,896
	18,226	93,415	40,245	10,484	6,107	51,915

Sources: IMF, *Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook*, various issues; [\\$">http://migration.ucdavis.edu/Data/remit \\$](http://migration.ucdavis.edu/Data/remit).

^a Total remittances refer to workers' remittances and compensation of employees. For most countries, except the Philippines, workers' remittances account for almost all remittances. For the Philippines, compensation of employees accounts for the larger share.

Not much evidence is available on other economic outcomes, notably the impact of labour migration on unemployment or skills acquisition. Stalker (2000:79) concludes that in some countries, emigration has an effect on unemployment and wages, but this is difficult to assess because the labour market is so huge. In the Philippines, the increasing share of rehires (those on a second contract or more) among the total number of workers deployed annually implies a lesser reduction in the pool of the unemployed. The issue of brain drain or loss of skills has also been raised. However, it can be argued that skills loss only occurs if there was a short supply of certain skills. The availability of a large supply of trained or college-educated population in India and the Philippines suggests that outflows of trained people do not constitute a loss of skills.

Some evidence on the skills formation of labour migration suggests negligible impacts. Based on their study of Filipino workers returning from the Middle East, Smart, Teodosio and Jimenez (1986) found that migrants did not acquire new skills, or if they did, they would have acquired new skills even if they did not migrate. A study on Filipino women who returned from abroad reveals similar findings. Many respondents claimed that they had learned new skills (e.g., international cuisine, some foreign language, singing and dancing, organizing, operating appliances), but these are skills that will not help them to find well-paying jobs in the local market (Asis, 2001). Given the nature of labour migration in Asia (less skilled), skill formation is unlikely to take place.

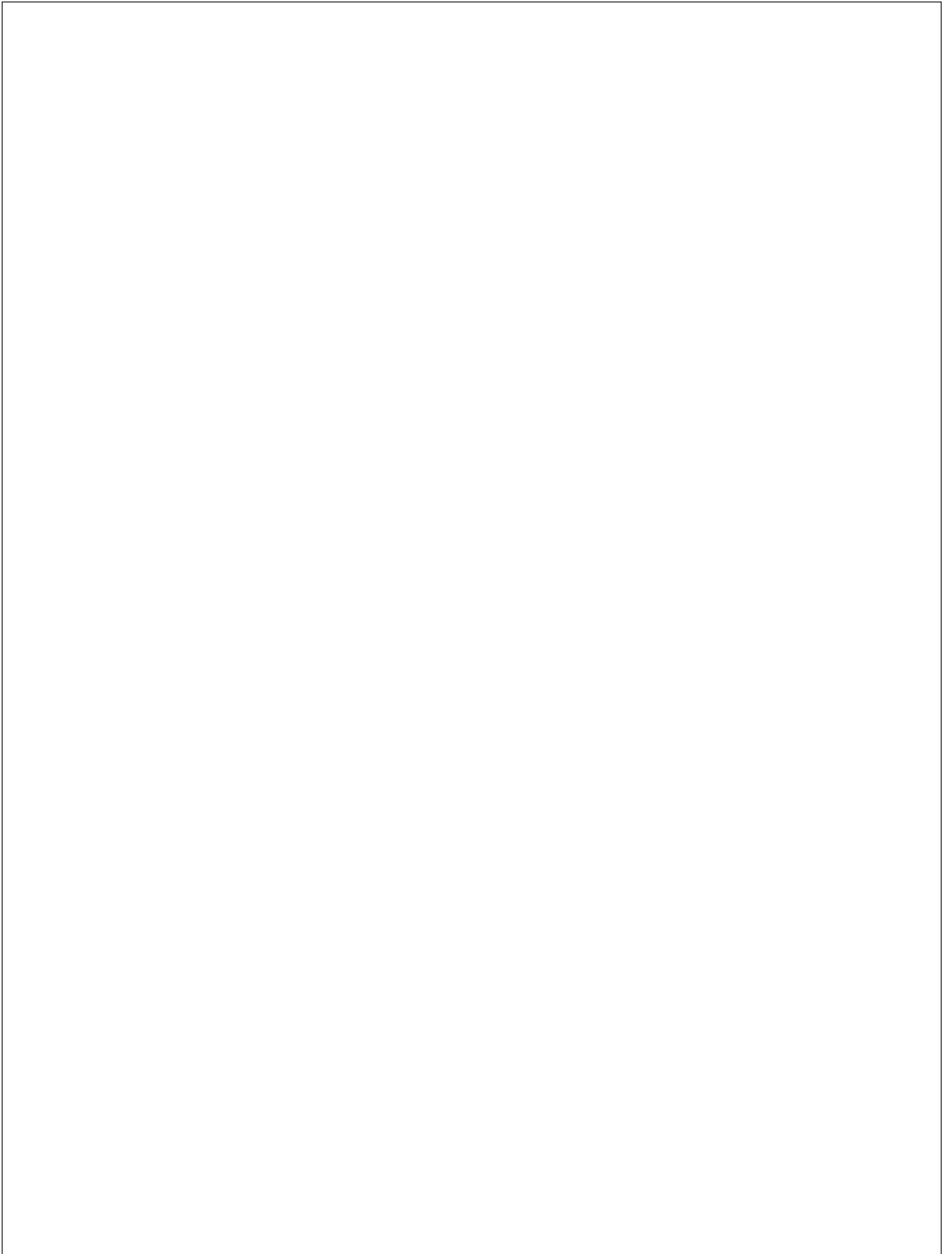
The economic benefits have been clouded by concerns over what many perceive to be unquantifiable social consequences. In the public discourse, there are concerns that international migration will breed a culture of migration, with emphasis on its negative implications – a continuing dependency on migration as a household strategy (and as a national policy), an outward-looking orientation and the possible loss of national identity. The separation of family members is feared to usher in the disintegration of families or to lead to other problems such as juvenile delinquency and the formation of materialistic values. In the Philippines, the general perception is that the economic benefits of migration cannot compensate for the social ills it brings (e.g., see Asis, 1995). Perhaps because of the vigilance of migrant NGOs and the media, the protection of migrants, especially women migrants, is also a major concern.

Migrants and their families generally acknowledge that migration has benefited them economically. Unlike public perceptions, studies find that families have been generally resilient in adjusting to international migration. Among others, the absence of migrants fostered changes in such areas as living arrangements, gender roles and family relations. Research findings reveal that the break-up of families, marital problems or problems with children are not particularly widespread among migrant families (Asis, 2001).²⁵ A four-

²⁵ It is also possible that research approaches, e.g., surveys, may not be able to capture such sensitive information.

III. Consequences of International Migration

country study of female labour migration in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Yunnan (China) found similar results (Wille and Passl, 2001). The same study also reports that despite the problems migrants had encountered, for migrants the positive outcomes outweigh the negative ones. Thus, when the perspective of migrants and their families is considered, they see migration as a pathway to a better life. The multiple factors and levels of analysis influencing migration call for a more comprehensive approach to appreciate its manifold consequences.



IV. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND PROSPECTS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Future trajectories of international migration present emerging opportunities for and threats to social development in the region.

A. Growing demand for the highly skilled, continuing demand for the less skilled

The demand for foreign workers will continue, despite the goal of countries of destination to phase out their dependence on foreign workers. The experience of the now developed countries supports the dual labour market theory's proposition of the necessity of importing workers to perform less skilled jobs. What the dual labour market theory did not anticipate is the emergence of a demand for highly skilled and professional migrants as well, which arises as economies continue the shift from manufacturing to the tertiary sector.

Based on a study of six APEC countries, Iredale and Mitchell (1995, as cited in Stahl, 2001:25) identified key shortages in the following areas: professional occupations (mechanical engineers, IT); management occupations (production and operations managers); and trade occupations (toolmakers, electrical mechanics and motor vehicle mechanics). International labour migration is one strategy to meet shortages in the skilled labour market, which is critical to support growth and to be competitive. For this reason, the welcome mat is spread out generously to the highly skilled. As mentioned earlier, countries of destination in Asia are open to the highly skilled and professionals. Some countries (e.g., Singapore) have designed programmes to attract these kinds of migrants. They are sought out and are provided with benefits and incentives that are not extended to less skilled migrants (e.g., family reunification). Aside from the gains to receiving countries, there are social development gains for the countries of origin and the migrants as well. The former could generate more remittances and there is also the possibility of technology transfer and skills formation, which are not realizable in less skilled migration. For individual migrants, aside from higher wages, this kind of migration could promote career advancement. They can also be assured of better protection and they can have a family life as well.

There will be a continuing demand for less skilled migrants,²⁶ but the prospects for social development are more uneven. In the countries of destination, employers and consumers may benefit from this arrangement, but the less educated and older sectors of the population could be displaced or vulnerable to low wages. The large supply of less skilled

²⁶ There are various reasons for this, including the unwillingness of local workers to perform 3D jobs, the cheaper costs of foreign workers and the limits of automation (Stalker, 2000:134).

workers makes this sector a buyers' market, where comparative advantage may rest on low wages. As Stahl (2001) noted, arrangements for the highly skilled are formalized under GATS and WTO, but the more numerous, the less welcome and the more vulnerable less skilled workers are "left to fend for themselves".

The protection of less skilled workers will become even more crucial in the emerging environment. Observers have noted the increasing costs of labour migration, which could reduce the returns of investment of migrants and their families. Brokers and intermediaries, both legal and illegal entities, have become important players in facilitating labour migration. In the competition for jobs in a limited and restricted international labour market, the costs (placement fees) are passed on to migrants. To meet these obligations, migrants get into debt, which requires them to work abroad longer in order to recoup their investments. This affects both legal and irregular migrants, although the latter tend to be more vulnerable. This is one aspect of labour migration which requires the cooperation of the origin and destination countries. Efforts on the part of countries of origin to monitor or regulate placement and recruitment agencies should be matched by efforts of destination countries to monitor employment agencies and employers. A trend towards casualization and informal work arrangements is also emerging, which will entail more disadvantages for migrant workers.

B. More female migration

The demand for highly skilled migrants will increase the migration chances of women, whose migration up until now is largely a response to the demand for domestic workers, entertainers and factory workers. In addition, population aging in the developed countries will have a direct effect on international migration, as developed countries will require more health care professionals and caregivers. Since women predominate in the health care sector, there will be more female migration at both the professional (e.g., nurses, physical therapists) and less skilled (e.g., caregivers, nursing aides) ends. Countries of origin will have to consider the impact of this migration on their own health care programmes and the consequences for families left behind.

C. The threat of irregular migration, particularly trafficking in persons, especially women and children

Irregular migration in Asia is not likely to decline. As in regular migration, those involved in irregular migration have also established networks and migrant institutions across transnational spaces, thereby facilitating further flows. Owing to their clandestine nature, such institutions are beyond the reach of government regulations and develop a life of their own. Irregular migration is not only expensive²⁷ but it also exacts other costs on

²⁷ For example, fees paid by Chinese immigrants to human smugglers have increased from \$30,000 to \$50,000 (Battistella, 2001:6).

migrants – a precarious existence as an irregular migrant, lack of access to basic services and no means of redress for grievances, among others. Irregular migration also seriously compromises the integrity of the asylum process and thereby jeopardizes the asylum chances of bona fide refugees.

Victims of trafficking are victimized many times over: being deceived, sold or abducted; being used for sexual exploitation, forced labour or domestic servitude or being forced into marriage; confinement; exposure to life-threatening conditions, including STDs and HIV/AIDS; or abuse at the hands of the authorities. The various discussions on the issue converge on the following basic approaches: to prevent it from happening through education; to protect victims of trafficking; to prosecute traffickers; and to provide assistance and services for the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking.

Migration pressures are greater for the poor, but as documented by various studies, the very poor cannot migrate because of lack of resources. Traffickers are aware of this and capitalize on the economic vulnerability of the poor to advance their pecuniary interests in the trade of people.

D. Policy implications

If the trends point towards more migration, what guarantees are there to protect more people on the move, particularly the less skilled and women migrants? If the needs of industrialized societies require more migration, can the question of integration continue to be ignored?

Recommendations concerning these two questions are part of the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the follow-up in Geneva in 2000.²⁸ Although the 10 commitments are directed at all people, the Copenhagen Declaration and the Geneva assessment include provisions specifically mentioning migrants or migrant workers (under commitments 4 and 5, full employment and social integration, respectively) and refugees (commitment 5, social integration). At the Geneva assessment, the following were reiterated for migrant workers (table 9):

- The protection of migrants: hence the importance given to ILO conventions and national and international instruments, and the need to ratify and implement international instruments, including the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.²⁹

²⁸ These were included in other world conferences in the 1990s: International Conference on Population and Development and Fourth World Conference on Women and Human Rights.

²⁹ As of December 2000, there were 16 ratifications. At least 20 are needed for it to enter into force.

Table 9. Commitments and provisions addressing migrants and refugees, Geneva assessment 2000

Commitment 1

To create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development:

Enhance international cooperation, including burden-sharing, and coordination of humanitarian assistance to countries affected by natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies and post-conflict situations in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development. (19)

Create and improve conditions to allow for the voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and dignity to their countries of origin, and the voluntary and safe return of internally displaced persons to their places of origin and their smooth reintegration into their societies. (20)

Commitment 3

To promote the goal of full employment as a basic priority of our economic and social policies, and to enable all men and women to attain secure and sustainable livelihoods through freely chosen productive employment and work:

Improve the quality of work and level of employment by, inter alia: Strongly considering the ratification and full implementation of other ILO conventions concerning the employment rights of minors, women, youth, persons with disabilities, migrants and indigenous peoples. (38b)

Ensure that migrant workers benefit from the protection provided by relevant national and international instruments, take concrete and effective measures against the exploitation of migrant workers, and encourage all countries to consider the ratification and full implementation of the relevant international instruments on migrant workers, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. (47)

Commitment 4

To promote social integration by fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons:

Intensify efforts to ensure the protection of the human rights and dignity of migrants irrespective of their legal status, the social and economic integration of documented migrants, the provision of effective protection for migrants, particularly by implementing the relevant provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, the provision of basic social services, the facilitation of family reunification of documented migrants and their equal treatment under the law. (68)

(continued)

Table 9. *(continued)*

Promote measures, at the national and international levels, to prevent illegal trafficking and transport of migrants and trafficking in persons, particularly women and children, for the purposes of prostitution, economic exploitation and any other form of exploitation, such as domestic servitude and bonded labour. Develop clear penalties for trafficking in persons and trafficking and illegal transport of migrants, backed by effective administrative procedures and laws, ensuring the punishment of those who have been convicted of such crimes. (69)

Finalize as soon as possible the trafficking and smuggling protocols which are currently being negotiated in Vienna by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. (70)

Strengthen the capability of relevant United Nations bodies, within their respective mandates, to promote measures for social integration in their post-conflict management strategies and activities, so as to better address trauma recovery, rehabilitation, reconciliation and reconstruction in post-conflict situations, inter alia, by promoting participatory development initiatives. Greater attention should be given to children, including unaccompanied refugee minors, displaced children, children separated from their families, those acting as soldiers and those involved in armed conflicts. (75)

- The protection of migrants, regardless of legal status, as they have human rights and dignity. For documented migrants, this calls for facilitation of family reunification and equal treatment before the law.
- The promotion of measures to prevent trafficking in persons, particularly women and children, the punishment of traffickers and the promotion of reintegration and rehabilitation measures.

For refugees, internally displaced people and other persons of concern, further actions include:

- International cooperation, including burden-sharing and coordination, for humanitarian assistance and post-conflict recovery and development.
- Improving conditions for the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of origin.

For the most part, market forces and the national interests of countries of destination define the terms or conditions under which migrants work. As noted earlier, there is a double standard in the migration policies pertaining to the highly skilled and professional migrants on the one hand and the less skilled on the other. In general, the migration regime prevailing in most receiving countries is not an enabling environment for less skilled migrant workers. While they are needed, migration policies do not accord due attention to the protection of migrant workers. In keeping with the policy to keep migration temporary, migrant workers are required to stick to their employers/assigned sector, providing migrants with limited options under abusive working conditions.

The integration of migrants has not been considered as well because of the orientation to keep migration temporary. However, trends, including future ones, indicate otherwise. Migrants, however, are only allowed to take part in the economic life of their host countries and are excluded from the social, cultural and political realms. In particular, the restriction on family reunification deprives migrants of the right to have a family life.

Following are some recommendations to enhance the potential of international migration as an instrument of social development:

For the region:

- Less economic concerns have to be incorporated in migration policies. The following principles – derived from the UNDP approach to make globalization “work for people” (UNDP, 1999:2) – are thinking points in anticipation of more migration:

Ethics – less violation of human rights, not more.

Equity – less disparity within and between nations, not more.

Inclusion – less marginalization of people and countries, not more.

Human security – less instability of societies and less vulnerability of people, not more.

Sustainability – less environmental destruction, not more.

Development – less poverty and deprivation, not more.

- A regional approach to labour migration issues is needed, particularly on human rights and protection issues. The concern with irregular migration and trafficking provided an opportunity to dialogue and cooperate on a regional plan of action to curb the problem. A regional dialogue on sharing the responsibility for protecting migrants can be a starting point for developing regional approaches.
- A follow-up and assessment of the regional plan of action on irregular migration and trafficking should be carried out to identify what has been done, what needs to be done and the necessary mechanisms to carry out further action.

For countries of origin:

- Countries of origin have devised various mechanisms and programmes to promote the protection of migrant workers and a sharing of good practices will be beneficial to others as well.
- Reintegration programmes in most countries of origin are still in the early stages. Most are focused on promoting self-employment or entrepreneurship for returning migrants. This option, however, only applies to migrants who have acquired

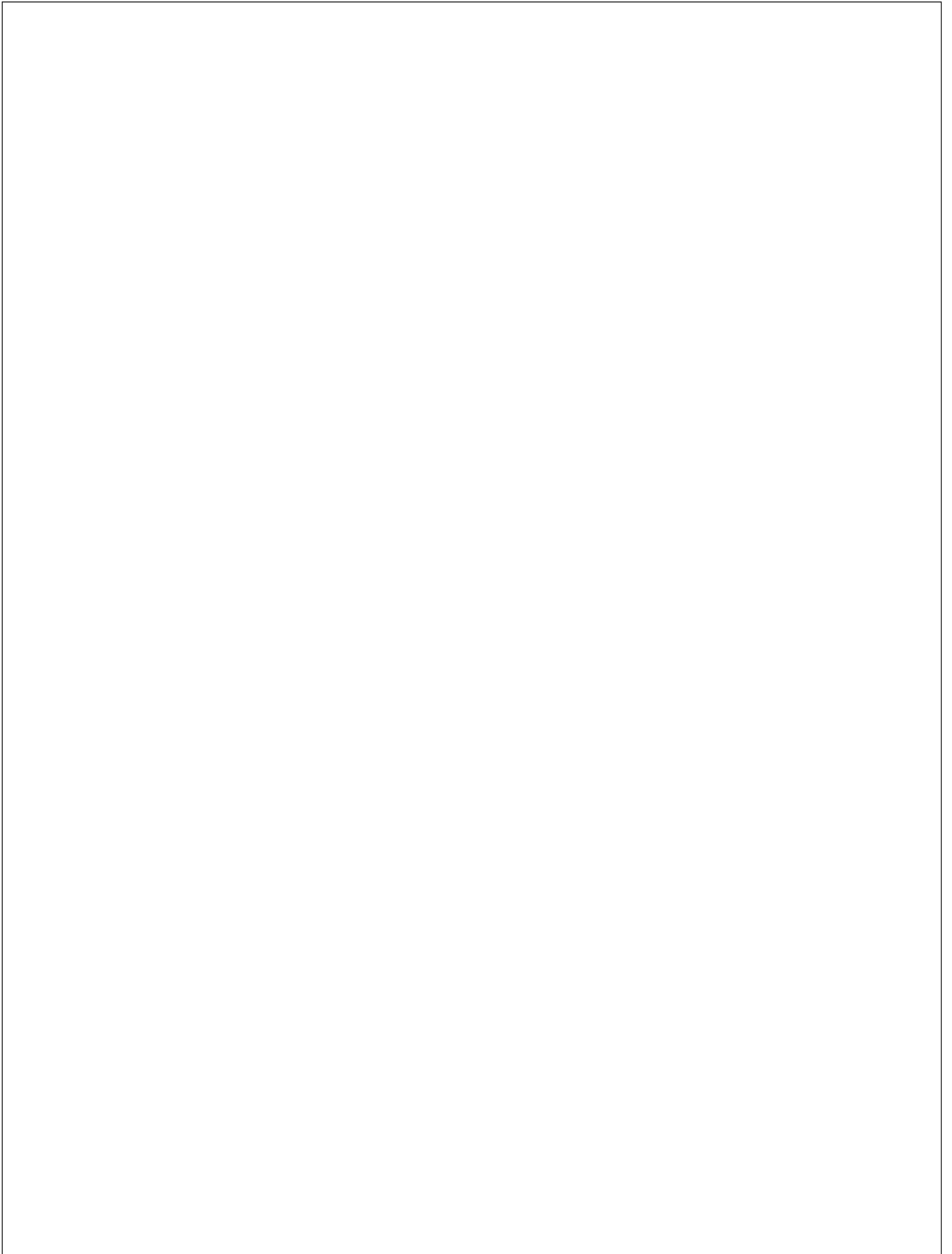
considerable savings. Reintegration programmes have to be expanded to respond to migrants returning in different circumstances. For example, victims of trafficking will require long-term support to rebuild their lives after being trafficked. Countries of origin will need assistance in tapping resources and developing institutional and human resource capabilities to implement reintegration programmes for victims of trafficking.

- Economic reintegration has been found to be a fundamental concern of migrants upon their return. There is a need to explore other programmes – e.g., pension plans – to enhance migrants’ economic security.

For countries of destination:

- Governments need to spearhead efforts to promote a culture of tolerance and respect for human rights in an increasingly culturally diverse environment. The promulgation of laws and policies aimed at protecting the rights of migrant workers will serve as a strong signal that migrants’ rights should not be sacrificed in the name of economic efficiency.

International migration has served as an instrument of development in the region, helping it to adjust to economic fluctuations. In the face of more migration, institutions in the region can choose to devise rules and mechanisms to lessen the vulnerabilities of migrants and promote a more equitable sharing of benefits and responsibilities brought about by migration.



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