

Migration in the Greater Mekong Subregion:
A Background Paper for the 4th Greater Mekong Subregion Development Dialogue

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1. Introduction

1. The large flows of migrant labour taking place in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) reflect the uneven pace of development among the economies comprising the Subregion, as well as the demographic disparities in its individual societies. Thailand, which is a driving force of economic expansion in the Subregion, currently hosts the largest population of migrant workers in the GMS. However, significant migration also occurs among the other GMS members, such as between the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and Viet Nam, between Viet Nam and Cambodia, between Myanmar and the People's Republic of China (PRC), and between the PRC and Viet Nam. Extensive internal migration also exists within these economies as well as other countries within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other regions, although such movements are beyond the scope of this paper.

2. Economic development in the GMS has been consistently strong over the last 10 years and the migration of workers within the Subregion has been an important contributing factor to that development. The rapid improvement in transport infrastructure throughout the Subregion has also greatly contributed to faster movement of both goods and people. Between 1992 and 2007 intra-GMS exports grew more than 25 times while exports to other countries increased about 10 times. Thus, intra-GMS exports grew more than twice as fast as did exports to other countries in the world (ARTNeT GMS, undated). Economies within the GMS and ASEAN have become more closely linked than ever before through rapid flows of capital, goods, services and information. At the same time, this increasingly integrated area, to a great degree, has been shaped economically by the magnitude and characteristics of migration in the GMS.

3. Disparities, both social and economic, remain however, and cross-border mobility, particularly of labour, is increasing in the GMS as employment opportunities develop in neighbouring countries and labour migrants move across borders to meet that market demand. Although economic and demographic factors would be enough to drive labour migration, these flows are further facilitated by such factors as the proximity of these economies to one another, their long porous borders, their cultural similarities, their population diasporas and

¹ The author is Regional Programme Development Officer, Regional Office for Southeast Asia, Bangkok, Thailand, International Organization for Migration (IOM). The main aim of this paper is to present background information for the 4th Greater Mekong Subregion Development Dialogue (GDD), organized by the Asian Development Bank on 5 May 2009 an activity of the Phnom Penh Plan for Development Management, a region-wide capacity building program in the GMS. The paper provides background information for the GDD in order to facilitate dialogue about labour migration in the Subregion, which comprises Cambodia, the PRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. It will also serve as a resource paper for the 9th Meeting of the GMS Working Group on Human Resources Development (WGHRD) on 20-21 May 2009 in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, PRC, which will discuss, among other matters, the GMS HRD Strategic Framework and Action Plan, of which labour migration is a component.

their construction of highways. All these factors are producing profound changes in trade and connectivity within the Subregion.

4. While the record of economic development is enviable, the Subregion could benefit even further from more comprehensive migration management policies aimed at truly harnessing the potential of its human capital and sustaining the development levels that these economies have achieved. In part, the Subregion's competitiveness depends on labour migration because it contributes to a flexible regional labour market that makes the GMS more productive, more efficient and more competitive.

2. Migration and development

5. With the exception of forced migration resulting from political or environmental displacement, almost all migration in the GMS is largely a social and economic phenomenon in terms of what drives that migration and of the benefits that the Subregion derives from it.

6. Migration and economic development are closely related in a number of ways. The very motive for people to migrate relates to an economic issue: the opportunity for people to obtain jobs and a better livelihood. Thus, the differences in development levels between countries create both "push" and "pull" factors. Labour migration enables the receiving countries to overcome internal labour shortages, which helps them to sustain economic growth and competitiveness. Moreover, by providing the migrants with employment opportunities, labour migration helps to alleviate the unemployment or underemployment of the migrants from the sending countries. Further, the remittances that the migrant workers transfer to their dependants in the sending countries also form an important source of foreign exchange for the Governments of those countries. Because the inflows increase the income of the recipient households, they contribute significantly to poverty reduction. More highly skilled migrants who maintain strong links with their home country also tend to strengthen technology, investment and venture capital ties between the sending and receiving country and promote a better cultural understanding between countries. This tends to increase trade flows between the sending and receiving countries and promotes harmonious relations between them.

7. However, these benefits do not come without the possibility of negative consequences, particularly when the migration flows between countries are not comprehensively managed. Labour migrants who accept dirty, difficult and dangerous jobs – the so-called "3D jobs" – for relatively low wages may depress the wages of local low-skilled workers in the receiving countries. When skilled workers migrate and the sending country does not develop economically, the sending country can be negatively affected: economic development at home becomes even more stunted, the quality of essential services declines, and growth and productivity are reduced. When trained and educated people leave home and do not come back, the return on public investment in education is also reduced. Finally, the remittances sent home by the migrants may lessen over time as migrants integrate within the receiving country and their ties with the sending country weaken. In such cases, the adverse social implications may be severe: desperation can result in an increase in smuggling, and trafficking in people may occur and the families and children left behind may experience overall hardships. Table 1 depicts some of these pros and cons.

Table 1. Economic contribution of migrants: an overall perspective

Positive effects	Negative effects
Enables receiving countries to address labour shortages and remain competitive in certain sectors	May widen economic disparities in the receiving countries by depressing the incomes of local low-skilled workers
Provides migrant workers with opportunities not available in their home countries	Loss/drain of highly skilled workers and reduced quality of essential services
May ease the effect on the domestic market of excess labour supply and reduce unemployment	Selective migration may cause increasing disparities in the countries of origin
Increases inflows of foreign exchange and remittances, which increases incomes and may lead to improved human development for the recipients	Reduced growth and productivity in the countries of origin because of the lower stock of highly skilled workers and externalities
Attracts technology, investments and venture capital from the diaspora to the sending country	Lower return from government investments in public education
May contribute to increased trade flows between the sending and receiving countries	Loss of fiscal revenue from the taxation of workers in country
Stimulates investment in domestic education and individual human capital investments	Remittances may diminish over time

Source: World Bank, 2006.

8. Sending and receiving countries can maximize the benefits of migration and reduce the negative impacts through better management of migration, which begins at the national level in the countries concerned. Such management should be coordinated both bilaterally and multilaterally and be clearly integrated into the broader and long-term development goals of the countries concerned (GCIM, 2005: 11).

9. One of the challenges facing migration management and migration policy dialogue is

Box 1. Definition of irregular migration

Irregular migration is the movement of people that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries. There is no clear or universally accepted definition of irregular migration. From the perspective of *destination countries* it refers to illegal entry, stay or work in a country, meaning that the migrant does not have the necessary authorization or documents required under immigration regulations to enter, reside or work there. From the perspective of the *sending country*, the irregularity is seen, for example, in cases when a person crosses an international boundary without a valid passport or travel document or does not fulfill the administrative requirements for leaving the country.

Source: IOM, *Glossary on Migration*, 2004

that, while international conventions may address these issues, they are not comprehensive and the definitions of some key terms are not universally accepted. What is lacking is a comprehensive legal framework for governing migration. This situation can make policy formulation and dialogue difficult, as it is essential for the dialogue partners to agree on the legal status of a person at any given time during the migration process in order to be able to determine the rights and obligations of the State and the migrant.

10. For the purposes of any policy framework governing labour migration, four key terms are important to understand: “regular” and “irregular” migrants (see box 1) and “trafficked” (see box 2) and

“smuggled” persons.² The meaning of these terms is important because it is the legal status of the migrants that determines their rights and obligations, in their countries of origin and destination, as well as the scope of any policy framework for regional migration that may be developed. Among the first priorities in developing such a policy framework should be definition of its scope, that is, exactly which migrants it would cover, and its long-term objectives.

11. Migration that occurs mainly bilaterally but also multilaterally through recognized legal channels is “regular” migration, according to the 2004 IOM *Glossary on Migration*. Much progress has been made throughout ASEAN on establishing legal channels for the regular migration of skilled workers. It is for the low-skilled workers who make up most of the migrants in the GMS that the legal channels for labour migration remain

limited, resulting in large-scale irregular migration throughout the Subregion. This situation further hinders the positive impacts that migration could have on socio-economic development both in the countries of origin and of destination. On one hand irregular migrants are vulnerable to exploitation and are often paid lower wages than required by minimum wage laws, thus limiting the possibility of such migrants contributing economically through remittances to their countries of origin and the families they leave behind. On the other, because irregular migrants are left outside the formal system of societies, they do not pay taxes in their countries of destination.

12. Because it is not possible for a migrant to have regular status without proper personal identification documents, irregular migrants are also sometimes referred to as “undocumented” migrants. The relationship between the lack of documentation and irregular migration in the GMS is important because some ethnic minorities in the Subregion cannot obtain nationality documents, meaning that if they migrate, they must do so irregularly.

13. A migrant’s status can change several times when the person is out of his or her own country. The most common way for this to happen is for the migrant to enter another country regularly (in compliance with all the country’s rules and regulations) but fail to continue to comply with the host country’s regulations, thus becoming irregular. Such a situation may occur, for example, when migrants remain in a country after their stay permit has expired or when they engage in unauthorized employment.

14. While the distinction between trafficked and smuggled persons is also very important, it often gets blurred. More extensively defined in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime and its Protocol to Suppress, Prevent and Punish Trafficking in Persons,

Box 2. Definition of trafficking

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.

Source: Article 3(a), United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime, and Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Organized Crime, 2000.

2 Another key term for migration analysis in the Subregion is “stateless”, which is defined as “A person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law” (Art. 1, United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954). As such, a stateless person lacks those rights attributable to nationality: the diplomatic protection of a State, no inherent right of sojourn in the State of residence and no right of return in case s/he travels.

trafficking is a criminal activity against the person that has been trafficked. A person who is trafficked is not doing so voluntarily, because by definition it is not possible for a person to choose to be trafficked.

15. The smuggling of people on the other hand is a crime against one or more States by the persons being smuggled and by the smugglers, agents or brokers, if there are any involved. Migrants generally choose to be assisted by smugglers, who profit from the illicit activity of getting the migrants into another country illegally, which results in those migrants immediately gaining an irregular status in the destination country. This element of voluntariness creates a very important distinction between the smuggling and trafficking of people. Another important distinction is that smuggling occurs only during the transportation phase, whereas trafficking (of both regular and irregular migrants) may take place at almost any point during the migration process. Of all the migrants in the GMS only a small percentage are trafficked. (The implications of irregular migration are discussed further in the “Issues and challenges” section of this paper.)

16. Because international migration by definition involves at least two countries, the migration process is best managed bilaterally and multilaterally between and among the countries concerned. Regional cooperation to achieve common development objectives can be very effective in ensuring that migration contributes to the development process and that the positive aspects of migration are maximized for as many stakeholders as possible. Such cooperation strengthens regional integration and promotes social and economic development.

17. For most stakeholders in the GMS, the benefits of irregular migration currently outweigh the negative consequences. Consequently, attempting to restrict the movement of people is not considered an effective approach. Because the determinants of migration are structural and the borders are long and porous, strict controls that try to prevent it are likely to be costly and not effective. Perhaps, as discussed in the section entitled “Towards a regional framework”, better results could be achieved through a more comprehensive migration management framework founded on bilateral and multilateral cooperation balanced with stricter border controls to protect national security interests.

18. In any case, irregular migration makes it more difficult for Governments to regulate labour markets and harness the benefits of migration in order to promote and develop national policies and regional strategic objectives that would contribute to the sustained growth and competitiveness of the region. While short-term economic benefits accrue to the private sector as a result of irregular migration, in the medium to long-term the Subregion may lose advantage, as there would be fewer incentives for the private sector in labor-intensive industries to invest in improved technologies and raise the skill levels of a low-cost workforce. Thus, existing laissez faire policies may appeal to the private sector that focuses on short-term gains; however, when viewed from the perspective of the long-term investor, such an approach to migration management is passive and will lead to increasing political and social costs in the sending and receiving countries and damage the concerned industries.

2.1 Driving forces

19. Despite the growth of the countries in the Subregion, considerable disparities still exist, as can be observed in the differences in the GDP per capita, ranging from US\$ 1,200 in Myanmar to US\$ 8,500 in Thailand for example. Such disparities obviously give rise to migration. Moreover, rapid economic development has led to changes in both the structure of production technology and labour characteristics in certain economies, creating push-pull factors that are compounded by demographic and social disparities as well as increased intra-regional connectivity.

20. The basic demographic indicators for Thailand show that the country has the lowest total population growth rate, fertility rate and growth rate of the age group 15-39 in the Subregion. In addition, the country has the highest GDP per capita in the GMS and has been experiencing rapid economic growth for over a decade. The combination of these factors has created employment opportunities that, at the low end of the wage scale, have been filled by workers from other GMS economies. In addition, the demography of the Thai population increasingly resembles that of developed countries: low fertility rates, low population growth rates, an ageing population and, within the Subregion, the highest per capita GDP.

Table 2. Basic economic and demographic indicators for GMS economies

Economic and demographic indicators	Primarily sending countries			Primarily sending and receiving countries		
	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Viet Nam	Cambodia	PRC	Thailand
Population (millions) July 2009 estimates	6.834	48.137	86.967	14.494	1,388.612	65.905
Population growth rates (%) 2009 estimates	2.316	0.783	.977	1.765	.655	.615
Growth rate of population aged 15-39 years, 2005-2010 (%)	2.97	.596	1.42	2.93	-0.95	-0.61
Total fertility rate (children born/woman) 2009 estimates	4.41	1.89	1.83	3.04	1.79	1.65
Net migration rate (per 1,000)	-3.4 (2005)	-.2 (2005)	-.38 (2009 est.)	.1 (2005)	.39 (2009 est.)	0.6 (2005)
GDP growth 2008 estimate (%)	7.5	.9	6.2	6.8	9.8	3.6
GDP per capita (US\$ at purchasing power parity) 2009 estimates	2,100	1,200	2,800	2,000	6,000	8,500

Sources: *CIA Fact Book* and *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.07.XIII.2).

21. The indicators are similar for the PRC as a whole. However, because comparable sets of economic and demographic data for Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region are not available, national data are used as substitutes in table 2. Nonetheless, it is known from other sources that real GDP growth in 2007 was 9 per cent and 15.1 per cent in Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, respectively (Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 2008 and 2006) and that per capita GDP reached an estimated US\$ 1,146 for Yunnan Province and US\$ 1,800 for Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Both have strong links with the GMS and ASEAN countries with regard to culture, economy, trade, transport and tourism.

22. Population projections for Yunnan Province suggest that its total population will reach 46.13 million by 2010 and 48.74 million by 2020, tending to decline after 2040. For Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the projected birth rate is already decreasing. Both provinces

have ageing societies that, in the absence of internal or international migration, could pose a number of problems for their economic and social development (ESCAP, undated).

23. The social and economic factors that push migrants primarily from the Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam are the converse of the pull factors that attract them to other countries. Characterized by higher fertility rates, younger populations, lower economic growth rates and lower per capita GDP, these countries tend to supply more migrant workers than they attract. Less developed countries, particularly the Lao PDR and to some extent Cambodia, have higher population growth rates than Thailand and a rising share of people in the working age group (World Bank, 2006).

24. The social and economic characteristics of each country are important in understanding how the labour markets operate and how the countries in the Subregion are linked by migration through labour supply and demand. The current driving forces and how they will evolve is crucial to effective medium and long-term policy development at both the national and subregional levels. Policies and cooperation agreements should be flexible enough to take into account the fact that migration is fluid and its patterns are constantly changing because the underlying social and economic forces driving it are in a state of continuous flux.

2.1.1. Economic role of migrants: Destination countries

25. It is extremely difficult to quantify the economic contribution of migrants in the GMS but there is little doubt that purely in economic terms, employers benefit from the availability of low-skilled workers willing to accept 3D jobs. Such workers have contributed to certain industries, such as fisheries and agriculture, not only viable but globally competitive (Huguet and Punpuing, 2005).

26. Indeed, employers in the GMS want continued access to migrant labour. In Thailand in particular, the number of foreign workers sought by Thai employers generally exceeds the migrants to whom the Thai Government is prepared and able to grant entry and work permits. In a scenario where migrant labour was absent, it is likely that wages for Thai workers would have to rise, at least somewhat overall, and in various sectors in particular, and the economic growth would be slower.

27. Few empirical studies have been undertaken in the GMS to validate or discredit the notion that migrant labour exerts downward pressure on national wages in the sectors that employ GMS migrants. The results suggest that immigration does lower Thai wages, but does not lower employment rates or affect internal migration (Bryant and Ruamnuaykit, undated). However, one of the consequences of having a large irregular migrant labour force working in substandard conditions is that the national labour force gets used to higher paying jobs and may lose employment opportunities as the supply of migrant workers is willing to accept employment at lower wages and under inferior conditions. Also, employers may prefer such workers to nationals who would demand higher wages and greater entitlements for the same work. Although there will always be some jobs that nationals would not want to perform even at the minimum wage, by not protecting migrant workers, a country's national labour force also loses out because irregular and unskilled migrant labour flows limit the incentives of the business sector to train the workforce, adopt safer work methods or labour-saving technology. Regularizing foreign workers so that they are equal to nationals in terms of labour standards and wages is more likely to encourage the private sector to invest in capital-intensive and skill-demanding technologies. This would likely reduce the demand for low-skilled migrants in these industries.

2.1.2 Economic role of migrants: Sending countries

28. Out-migration in the GMS to a large extent occurs as a result of unemployment or underemployment in the countries of origin. While there is no empirical evidence in the GMS that migration reduces unemployment in the host community, it can be assumed that, if migrants did not benefit from migration, that is, if they were no better off because of it, they would not migrate. It appears that migration has a very direct economic benefit on the migrant that often translates into a direct economic benefit for the family of the migrant through the remittances sent home by the migrant worker.

Box 3. The current global recession: Possible consequences for migration

The current global recession has already resulted in a decrease in the growth rate of international migration, but the impact on migrant workers is not yet clear. First, recession does not affect all sectors equally. The demand for agricultural workers, fisheries workers and domestic workers would be unlikely to show much effect from a recession because these employment sectors provide basic necessities to society which are not much affected by GDP. It is unlikely that many of these migrant workers in the fishing and domestic sectors would be laid off. The sector that employs a large number of migrant workers and that is likely going to be most affected is construction. This is because unlike the other sectors that employ migrants, construction is a pro-cyclical business, increasing substantially when the economy is strong, but decreasing considerably when the economy is weak.

During the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis, there was no indication of a large exodus of migrant workers from Thailand. It can be anticipated that, if the Thai Government cancels work permits for migrant workers, workers who are currently regular may become irregular when their contract expires if they are willing to work for reduced wages (making them more attractive to employers who would pay lower wages and control them more easily). Recently, the Thai Government announced a plan to register an additional 400,000 irregular workers already in Thailand but not to grant any new work permits to migrants from Cambodia (Office of Foreign Workers Administration, 2009).

There may be political pressure on Governments that host large numbers of migrant workers, particularly irregular migrants, to crack down on them. Historically however such methods have not been used on a large scale. Furthermore, such crackdowns are likely to have only a limited effect because of the challenges associated with returning irregular migrants in a region where no formal return systems exist and the expulsion of irregular migrants is not an effective deterrent to irregular migration.

29. The value of the total remittances in the Subregion is not well known because the money transfers from the migrants to their country of origin generally are not made through official channels but through well-organized informal mechanisms instead. In the *Situation Report on International Migration in Thailand (2005)*, a conservative estimate of the value of remittances is about US\$ 14.8 million per month, although a more realistic estimate would be US\$ 26 million per month from Thailand to Cambodia, the Lao PDR and Myanmar. Remittances to Myanmar account for up to 75 per cent of these amounts. If increased use of formal channels to send remittances could be fostered, this could lower the cost of making remittances, while at the same time improving data collection concerning the value of the remittances in the Subregion.

30. Studies indicate that remittances are used to improve household conditions, with large portions spent on the repair or building of houses and on daily expenditures for life's necessities. Other expenditures include those for enhancing agricultural production, paying

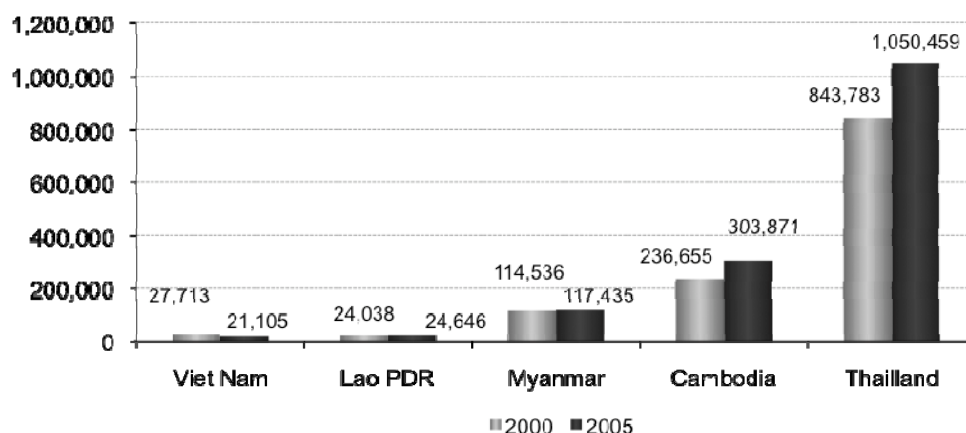
for children’s education and acquiring durable goods (Sciortino and Punpuing, 2009: 78). Some preliminary data from studies in Lao PDR suggest that remittances are sometimes also used for community development purposes.

3. Stocks, flows and patterns

31. Accurate estimates of the number of migrants in the GMS are very difficult to make for two reasons: (a) systems to capture data on migrants are not well established and (b) a prevailing characteristic of migration in the GMS is that it is largely irregular and, by definition, does not appear in official government statistics. Even though the official figures are not representative of the true migration trends, they are indicative of what is occurring in the Subregion and provide the best basis for the analysis of trends and patterns and for making forecasts.

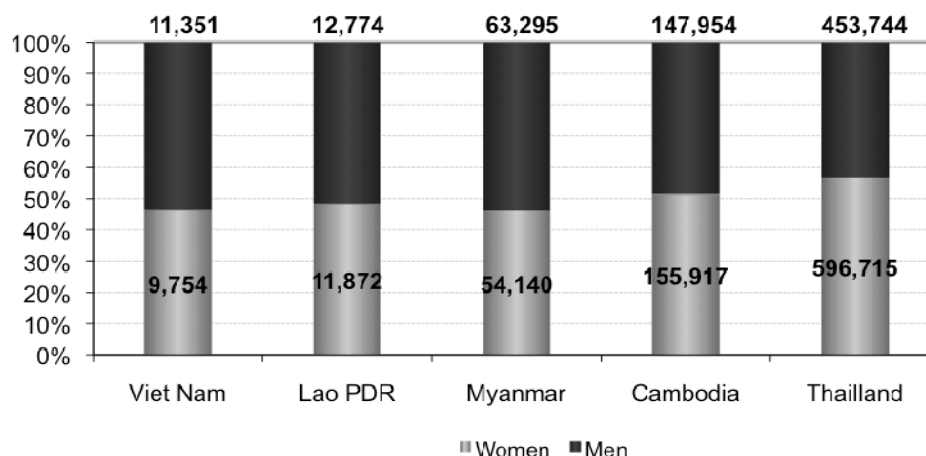
32. According to the latest statistics from the United Nations (UNDESA, 2005), the GMS economies have experienced an increase in the number of foreigners they host (known as “migrant stock”). Figure 1 is based on census data collected at 10-year intervals by the national Governments concerned. These official data do not include irregular migrants that by some estimates may be double the number of regular migrants reflected in the official figures (Ray and others, forthcoming).

Figure 1. Migrant stock in the GMS, 2000 and 2005



Source: United Nations, 2005.

Figure 2. Migrant stock in the GMS, by sex, 2005



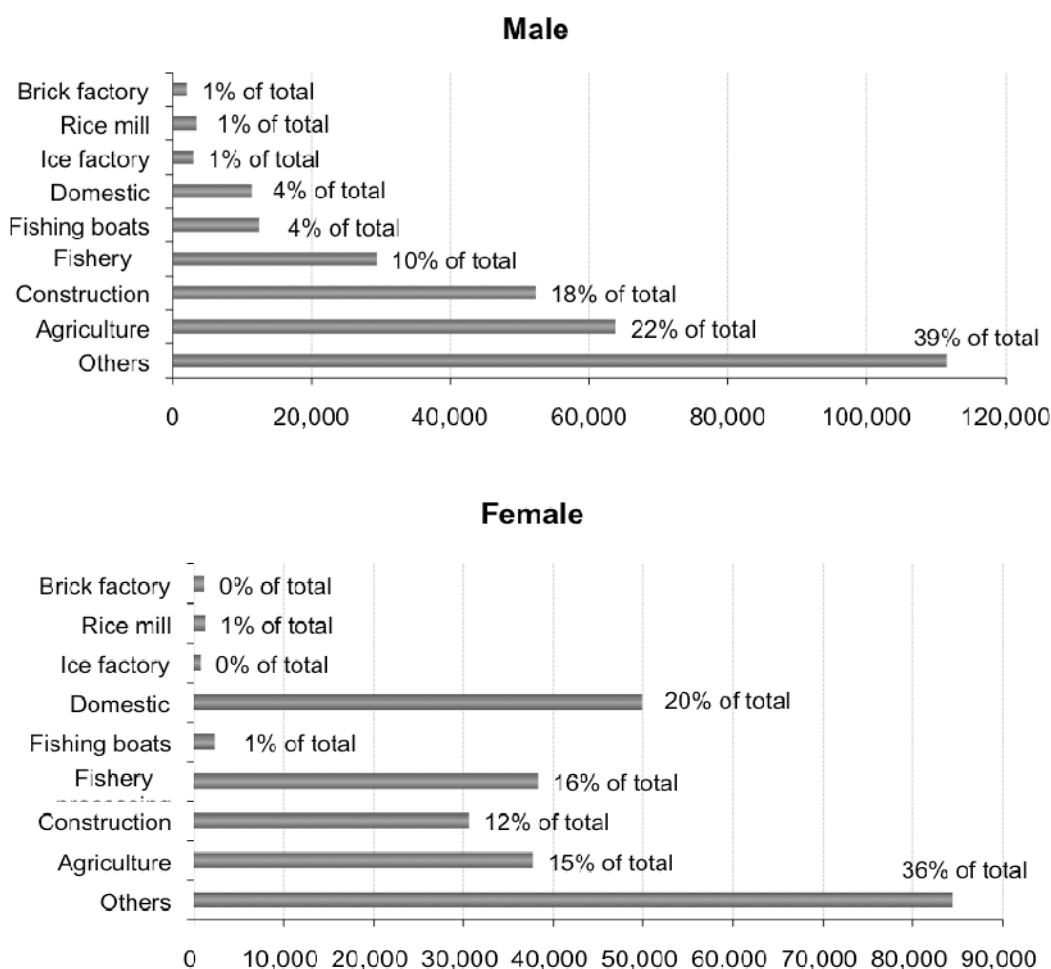
Note: The stock figures include migrants from outside the GMS.
Source: United Nations, 2005.

33. As previously discussed, information on the social and economic disparities between the economies in the Subregion is essential for understanding the migration dynamics in the GMS because those disparities create push and pull factors that shape the migration flows and can help in the formulation of better policies aimed at promoting regional integration and cooperation.

34. All the economies in the GMS receive and send migrants and the migration flows connect all the economies to each other. In this context, Cambodia and Thailand are net recipients of migrants, with Thailand being the main recipient and hosting most of the migrants in the GMS from Cambodia, the Lao PDR and Myanmar.

35. Migration to Thailand comprises mostly low-skilled workers from Cambodia, the Lao PDR and Myanmar. It is estimated that there are more than 2 million irregular migrants from the Subregion in Thailand in addition to the 535,732 registered with Thailand's Ministry of Labour. The sectors where most migrant workers are employed are construction, agriculture, fisheries and domestic work (Sciortino and Punpuing, 2009). For a detailed breakdown of the number of GMS migrants registered in Thailand by nationality, sector and sex, please see the attached appendix.

Figures 3 and 4. Registered migrant workers in Thailand, by sector and sex as of December 2007



Source: Office of Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Employment, Thai Ministry of Labour, 2008.

36. Workers, often skilled persons and tradesmen, are known to migrate from Viet Nam to Cambodia, Lao PDR and border areas of the PRC. However, the magnitude of these flows is not known because most of these movements are irregular. Nonetheless, various estimates exist. In early 2000, the National Economic Research Institute of Lao PDR found that 6,889 foreign workers had been registered in all provinces in 1999. In the same, period the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare reported 2,328 foreign workers, while the Lao-Viet Nam Cooperation Agency reported that about 15,000 Vietnamese, including irregular migrants, were in Lao PDR. Estimates of Vietnamese migrants in Cambodia, excluding long-time residents, are in the hundreds of thousands (Merli, 1997).

37. The PRC has encouraged skilled migration and the return of skilled migrants but has not focused on the export of low-skilled labour. However, irregular migration to the Subregion through smuggling or trafficking) is a feature of migration from the PRC. A large number of irregular migrants from the PRC seek to work in various countries in the Subregion.

38. The migration from Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the PRC is primarily to the Lao PDR and Viet Nam; it consists of low, medium, highly skilled employees who work for large infrastructure projects and business persons (Sciortino and Punpuing, 2009). Migration between Yunnan Province and Myanmar also occurs. However, little is known about the size and demographic characteristics of these migrants.

Table 3. Predominant migration flows in the GMS

Origin	Destination	Status	Sector or Skill level
Cambodia	Thailand and Viet Nam	Regular and irregular to Thailand; irregular to Viet Nam	Primarily low skilled (agriculture, fisheries and construction); primarily agriculture in southern Viet Nam
Lao PDR	Thailand and small numbers in Yunnan Province, PRC	Regular and irregular to Thailand; not known to Yunnan Province, PRC	Primarily low skilled
Myanmar	Thailand, Yunnan Province, PRC	Irregular if they arrived in Thailand after 2004; regular to Yunnan Province, PRC	Primarily low skilled in Thailand; low skilled and business persons in Yunnan Province, PRC
Thailand	No significant migration to other GMS economies (other than professionals and intra-corporate transfers)	Not known	Not known
Viet Nam	Cambodia, Lao PDR and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, PRC	Mostly irregular (no legal channels from Viet Nam to other GMS economies)	Primarily low skilled to Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, PRC; medium, high skilled and business persons to Cambodia and Lao PDR
Yunnan Province, PRC	Lao PDR, Viet Nam and Myanmar	Regular and irregular	Low-skilled (agriculture, mining), medium-skilled and business persons

Source: World Bank, 2006; Sciortino and Punpuing, 2009; Ray and others, forthcoming.

39. The majority of the intra-regional migration can be characterized as comprising low-skilled workers who are willing to accept the 3D jobs at wage rates that are lower than what nationals are willing to accept. However, more skilled migration is also occurring, particularly

from the PRC and Viet Nam. Overall, the occupational range of intra-GMS workers may be considered quite broad.

40. Migration in the GMS can be long-term (sometimes leading to permanent residence as is the case with some Myanmar nationals living in Thailand), short-term (between one and three years), seasonal (particularly for agriculture) and even just for a day as is common particularly for migrants from Cambodia and Lao PDR who utilize Thailand's border pass system.³

41. One of the main challenges to policy dialogue in the Subregion is the lack of official data on migration in the GMS. With the exception of the official data that is available about migration to Thailand, data about migration is otherwise scarce. Little is known about migration between Viet Nam and Cambodia and between the PRC, the Lao PDR and Viet Nam. The dearth of data makes it very difficult to determine trends and patterns over the last two decades and to formulate policies and strategies that would enhance subregional development. For the time-being, policies are dictated primarily by the private sector's demand for workers rather than social, economic and development considerations about how best to harness the benefits of migration in the Subregion.

3.1 Ethnic groups

42. Ethnic communities exist throughout the Subregion and the factors that encourage them to migrate are similar to those of other migrants in the GMS. The main issue that differentiates the migration of ethnic groups from that of the majority of the population is their often undefined legal status in their country of residence because some of these populations cannot obtain proper birth registration documents or nationality identification. As a result, many ethnic groups may have no choice but to migrate irregularly, a situation that renders them among the most vulnerable migrants in the GMS.

43. Ethnic groups have also felt the impacts of large infrastructural development projects in the Subregion. Such projects have sometimes resulted in the displacement of these groups. One unintended consequence of such projects is often a temporary influx of construction workers and an increase in the in-migration of workers to otherwise remote areas. This causes tension between communities and increases the vulnerability of the people in such areas to HIV infection and human trafficking.

3.2 Gender

44. Although trends in other parts of Asia and in ASEAN countries indicate that a greater number of women than men currently are migrating, there is no evidence that this is the case in the GMS region. It is likely that, for the region as a whole, the percentage of men and women migrating is close to parity, with males having perhaps a slight edge.⁴ According to

3 It should also be noted that all economies in the GMS, with the possible exception of the Lao PDR, deploy migrant workers to other countries in ASEAN and also to other regions formally through government-to-government agreements or other regulated systems.

4 For a more comprehensive discussion of gender, migration and development, please see: IOM and others, *Situation Report on International Migration in East and South-East Asia*, 2008: pages 163-172.

official figures from the Thailand Office of Foreign Workers Administration, a total of 53.9 per cent of the migrants from Cambodia, the Lao PDR and Myanmar are male.

45. These figures are helpful for making regionwide estimates of female migrants in light of the large number of migrant workers that Thailand attracts. However, there is reason to believe that the number of female migrants in the GMS could be underreported owing primarily to the fact that a greater percentage of women are employed in informal sectors that are unregulated and not included in registration processes, for example, in domestic work and the sex trade. The lack of regulation in these sectors tends to put women in vulnerable situations, subjecting them to more abuse and exploitation than their male counterparts, and restricting their freedom of movement while offering them fewer legal rights.

46. Restrictions on entry and work permits also affect men and women differently as most opportunities for regulated migration are in male-dominated sectors. Such a situation leaves some women with no alternative but to migrate irregularly.

4. National policies, bilateral cooperation, and regional and subregional arrangements

4.1 National policies

47. National migration policies in the GMS are characterized by the development level of the economy concerned. Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet all have policies that focus on out-migration, focusing on protecting the migrant workers and maximizing the benefits that arise from labour migration: primarily remittances and reductions in unemployment or underemployment. These economies are often looking for new markets within and outside the GMS in order to alleviate their levels of domestic unemployment or underemployment. In the last 10-15 years, these economies have been able to accomplish this goal because of their relatively high population growth rates and total fertility rates that, except for the PRC, are higher than those of other countries in the Subregion. Viet Nam in particular is focusing on possible labour markets outside the Subregion.

48. The policies of these countries tend to react to the policies of the more developed countries rather than being proactive and integrated within the broader national development objectives.

49. Thailand has policies that focus on both out-migration to other regions and in-migration from other GMS economies. The aim of its policies in this regard is to meet labour market demands and the needs of the private sector and to curb irregular migration. The policies are designed to limit the long-term settlement in Thailand of labour migrants and the migration of their dependants, which is a consistent theme globally among countries that host large populations of migrant workers.

50. Key aspects of GMS labour migration management policy are manifested in the work permit renewal registrations required of migrants from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar who are already working in Thailand; these are contained in various bilateral memorandums of understanding (MOUs).

51. Generally, the formulation of clearer and more comprehensive national migration policies that are integrated into national development plans, including those concerning labour market development, education and training, is necessary regionwide. Such steps at the national level are important in maximizing the benefits of migration and for fostering effective regional migration dialogue that contributes to greater integration.

4.2 Bilateral cooperation

52. Bilateral agreements exist between Thailand and Cambodia, Lao PDR (2002) and Myanmar (2003) to regulate labour migration to Thailand. There are no other bilateral labour migration agreements among the GMS economies.

53. Each of the three MOUs is very similar and has the intention of establishing close collaboration between the contracting States with regard to the sending and receiving of migrant workers, including better matching of supply and demand through quotas, enhanced protection of migrant rights and measures to reduce irregular migration and long-term or permanent settlement in Thailand.

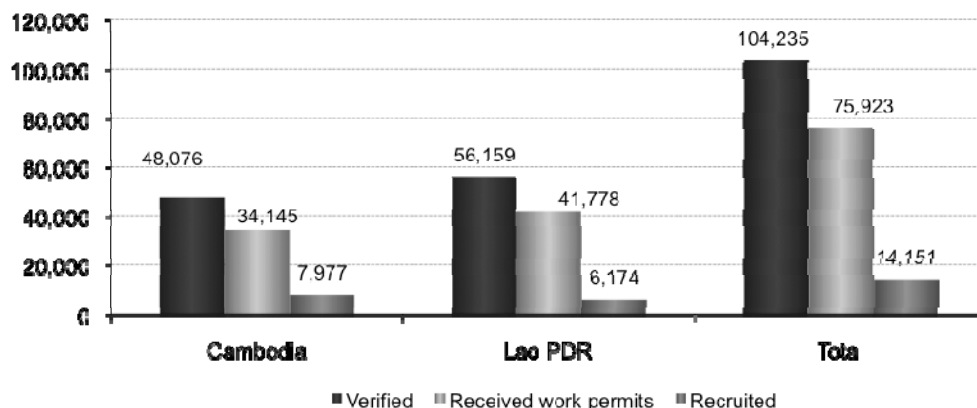
54. The MOUs establish the framework to regularize migration to Thailand and the countries have implemented this in two ways. The first targets migrants already working in Thailand, establishing a process to regularize their status. The second targets the flow of migrants into Thailand, that is, migrants who are not yet in the country but are interested in securing employment there.

55. For migrants already in Thailand, Cambodian and Lao officials work together with Thai authorities to verify the nationality of, and issue Certificates of Identity to the migrant workers. These certificates allow the migrants to apply for and obtain two-year work permits. Following the expiry of the work permits, the migrants are expected to return to their country of origin where they can apply for a new work permit.

56. For workers not in Thailand but looking for work there, the contracting Governments have agreed to procedures involving recruitment companies. The recruitment companies match labour supply and demand in line with the quotas and regulations established by the Government of Thailand. Candidates who are qualified for available positions may then apply for visas, work permits and health coverage. The recruitment companies facilitate the transfer of the workers to Thailand.

57. Figure 2 illustrates the number of migrant workers regularized in Thailand or recruited to work in Thailand under the bilateral MOUs with Cambodia and the Lao PDR. While the MOUs exemplify the political will of the contracting Governments to reduce irregular migration, the procedures and processes are considered by migrants to be too expensive and complicated to be effective.

Figure 4. Number of regular migrant workers in Thailand under various MOUs



Source: Office of Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Deployment and Thai Ministry of Labour, 2008.

58. The MOUs are an excellent initiative by the contracting States. However, their implementation has proceeded slowly and with mixed results:

- The Lao PDR and Cambodia have made some progress with regard to the issuance of Certificates of Identity: 41,778 Lao nationals and 34,145 Cambodian nationals had received them as of 2007;
- No Myanmar nationals have had their nationality verified, been issued any Certificates of Identity, nor have any been recruited from that country owing to difficulties between the Governments concerned in implementing the procedures. Effectively, this means that there are currently no legal channels for nationals in Myanmar to work in Thailand and no way for irregular Myanmar nationals already in Thailand to regularize their status;
- More than six years after the signing of the MOUs, the set quota of 200,000 workers recruited under them has not yet been reached;
- The MOUs have mainly served to regularize a small portion of the migrant workers already in Thailand.

59. Implementation has been slow for several reasons and these can serve as important lessons learned about the regulation of low-skilled labour migration in the GMS. These reasons include the following:

- Expensive government fees and other administrative costs in both the sending and receiving countries;
- Disputes over the role of recruitment agencies;
- “Repatriation” fund costs and costs related to the issuance of passports;
- Procedures that are complicated and difficult to understand;
- No clear benefits to migrate regularly in terms of protection, rights and legal recourse for labour and other violations.

60. There are also cross-border provincial agreements between Thailand and Cambodia and Lao PDR, but how successful these agreements are is not known because little data on them are available and not much is known about the state of negotiations between the border provinces. More information about how these agreements are supposed to work and whether they are working could be helpful in establishing similar systems in other countries.

61. In some cases, Governments in the Subregion could benefit from enhanced migration management capacities, policy formulation and the development of information systems to better manage the regional migration flows. How the Subregion could build on what exists and what has been learned is further discussed in the section entitled “Towards a regional framework”.

4.3 Regional and subregional arrangements

62. Migration management and labour migration dialogue in ASEAN are not yet well developed. As with other bilateral and multilateral issues, such as trade, countries must be prepared to make some concessions in order to reach regional consensus, This is particularly difficult in respect of labour migration issues because of the political sensitivity associated

with allowing foreigners to access labour markets as well as the sovereign right of States to determine who may admitted within their borders, for how long and for what purpose.

63. At the ASEAN level, member economies adopted the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint in 2007. This emphasizes that the “free flow of trade in services is one of the important elements” in realizing an ASEAN economic community. The free flow of trade in services and the provision for enabling the subsequent mobility of professionals in the Subregion create impacts on labour markets and pose various labour migration management challenges. While freeing up the flow of services includes greater mobility for highly skilled and professional workers who are engaged in cross-border trade and investment activities, it does not capture the majority of the regional migrants who are low-skilled.

64. The protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers is mentioned in the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint (2009-2015), indicating that the issues are high on the political and development agenda of member States. Given the region’s social and economic characteristics, it can be expected that regional mobility, in particular labour mobility, is going to become increasingly important as the union of ASEAN members is strengthened. The Blueprint states, as a strategic objective, the following: “fair and comprehensive migration policies and adequate protection for all migrant workers in accordance with the laws, regulations and policies of respective ASEAN Member States as well as implement [sic] the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers”. Although this language does not rule out the possibility of a regional framework governing labour migration, it also does not specifically envision it or encourage it.

65. The ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (the “Cebu Declaration”) was signed by member countries of ASEAN in Cebu, Philippines, on 13 January 2007. A designated group of selected countries subsequently met in 2009 to discuss the possible establishment of a regional instrument to manage certain aspects of labour migration in line with the objectives set out in the Cebu Declaration. Reaching regional consensus on a document dealing specifically with intra-ASEAN labour migration would be an important step forward towards curbing irregular migration and affording migrant workers with better protection. However, it is not yet clear what kind of instrument may be formulated or what its scope would be.

66. Of the three main Conventions of the International Labour Organization on migrant workers and the families of migrant workers, only Cambodia signed (in 2004) the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. None of the GMS members have signed the ILO Convention concerning Migration for Employment [No. 97] or the ILO Convention concerning Migration in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (Supplemental Provisions) [No.143].

67. In 2004, representatives of the GMS countries signed an MOU to cooperate against trafficking in persons in the GMS. In support of this MOU a follow-up subregional plan of action was developed and a process established (known as the “COMMIT” process) aimed at facilitating cooperation among Governments in the GMS in respect of counter-trafficking and implementing the principles outlined in the MOU. The major strength of the COMMIT process has been the strong government buy-in.

5. Issues and challenges

5.1 Irregular migration

68. The main migration management challenge to the GMS is curbing irregular migration because the implications of such migration affect a wide range of stakeholders, including the Governments of sending and receiving countries, the migrants themselves and the host communities. Irregular migration may also be a cause of concern to national security authorities. Overall, the Subregion could benefit much more from international migration if the flows become more regulated and better managed.

69. Large numbers of irregular migrants make it more difficult for Governments to manage migration and labour markets. With limited information available about the size of the migrant populations, the composition of the migrants' families and their living and working conditions, it is difficult for Governments to formulate appropriate policies to manage the migration process. The labour markets are also affected, as it is more difficult for Governments to regulate the sectors of the economy that employ large number of irregular migrant workers. The ability of Governments to regulate and influence labour market policy is therefore also affected, which has national and regional implications. The economic costs involved are also higher with irregular migrants because regular migrants can be required to contribute to the social system through taxes on the income they earn.

70. The choice to migrate is usually a difficult one and for many, the difficulties continue throughout the migration process. The work migrants do is difficult and maybe dangerous, the living conditions are often poor and migrants are generally neither welcomed or well treated in the host country. Language and cultural barriers further compound these difficulties and contribute to the marginalization of migrants and migrant communities in many countries around the world.

71. Migration flows are largely determined by social networks consisting of relatives, friends or acquaintances who previously migrated and who share their experiences and information about opportunities, and by agents or brokers who facilitate the migration process. For their services, brokers charge fees ranging from US\$ 25 to US\$ 600, which may be less than the costs associated with regular migration that requires a passport and usually involves other administrative costs or fees. In many countries, the agents and brokers operate mostly informally, thus creating the opportunity for recruitment practices that are not fair, not transparent and not cost-effective for the migrant.

72. One of the reasons that it has been difficult to increase the number of workers migrating to Thailand under bilateral MOUs is that in many cases the migrants can save money and time by migrating irregularly, through an agent or broker.

73. There are risks however as the migrants may be cheated, have their documents seized or receive false information about their future employment and earnings. There is also a greater potential for such migrants to be beaten and abused. In the worst cases, migrants may even be trafficked.

5.2 Human trafficking

74. Both regular and irregular migrants are vulnerable to human trafficking, although the vulnerability of irregular migrants is higher as they are generally more exposed to abuse and exploitation than regular migrants. Because trafficking is illegal, there are no accurate statistics on this crime.

75. Trafficking is one aspect of the migration flows that exists throughout the Subregion and between virtually all economies in the region. There are known cases of trafficking between virtually all economies in the GMS although the predominant trends that have been observed are between Myanmar, the Lao PDR and Cambodia to Thailand and from Viet Nam

to Cambodia. As with migration flows, the trafficking extends beyond the GMS to other countries in ASEAN and to other regions; however, such events are beyond the scope of this paper.

76. Most of the trafficking that has been identified is for sexual exploitation; however, there is growing evidence that trafficking for labour also exists, particularly in sectors that employ mainly migrant workers.

77. It has been estimated that some 200,000 people are trafficked annually in the GMS (IOM, 2004). Although this is a large number in absolute terms, it represents only a small percentage of the total number of migrants in the GMS. While government mechanisms exist to formally identify and repatriate victims of trafficking, such means benefit only about 0.3 per cent of the estimated number of victims (Huguet and Ramangkura, 2007).

5.3 Social impacts

78. In the destination country, the risks and vulnerabilities faced by labour migrants continue. Migrant workers often work in substandard conditions because the enforcement of labour standards in the GMS is generally weak even for the protection of local labour. In view of such a situation, even regular migrant workers receive limited protection and have limited recourse to remedial action if their employment rights are violated. This is another reason why it is difficult to persuade workers to incur the costs involved with regular migration and to register with the authorities, as it is not obvious to them that the benefits associated with registering would be realized and would outweigh the costs involved.

79. Withholding or non-payment of wages and the enforcement of excessive work hours have commonly been reported. Fear of employers, bonded labour and irregular status serve to pressure many migrants to remain in abusive situations (Pearson and others, 2006: xxi-xxiii). Some employers illegally confiscate the documents of migrant workers in order to discourage them from leaving. This leaves migrants unable to prove their status in the destination country and deprives them of the limited protection to which they should be entitled (Sciortino and Punpuing, 2009: 66).

80. Regular migrant status imparts important benefits. First, having a recognized legal status in a foreign country provides the workers with protection from being arbitrarily detained or expelled from the country. Second, in countries such as Thailand registration ensures entitlement to public health services and other legal benefits for workers that are equal to the entitlement of nationals of the host country.

81. Two important social issues in the GMS that affect the children of migrants are the lack of access to health and education services. With the large, mobile populations of migrants involved in the Subregion, it is in the interest of the public health authorities in those economies and beyond that all migrants be provided with access to basic health-care services.

82. Labour migrants usually come from under-resourced economies where the health infrastructure may be weak, and where access to health and social services may already be limited to begin with. Perhaps this is why such migrants often exhibit low awareness of personal health issues, prevention and safety concerns, and accept living under poor environmental conditions during the migration process, especially in transit and in destination countries as they adjust to their new environments, overcome social isolation, and language and cultural barriers. Migrants are reluctant to seek health-care services or they usually have very limited access to migrant-friendly health care including access, prevention, treatment and care services. Consequently, their health-seeking behaviour becomes negatively affected.

Some Governments, international and national partners in South-East Asia have taken positive steps to address the public health concerns of migrants and mobile populations. Yet, such steps are still considered insufficient as many of these highly vulnerable populations, including trafficked persons, fall outside the scope of existing national health policies as well as regional plans of action and surveillance systems. The health vulnerabilities of undocumented migrants and trafficked persons are exacerbated by their illegal or clandestine status.

6. Towards a regional framework for sustainable migration management in the GMS

83. The migration patterns in the Subregion are well established but the absence of rigorous regulation means that the labour market is not truly integrated. Despite the importance of regional labour migration for economic competitiveness and growth, developments in this area lag behind other regional initiatives related to regional integration and in particular, the flow of good and services.

84. Generally, both sending and receiving countries benefit from regulated migration. For receiving countries, greater regulation of labour migration would enable them to gain a better understanding of the needs of labour markets. Regular migrants also contribute in the receiving countries by paying taxes on their income. Sending countries could be more confident that regular labour migrants will receive adequate wages, thereby increasing the remittances they send home, and be less vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and health risks. Migration management systems that work in this way would also improve relations between the sending and receiving countries, thus further contributing to the prosperity competitiveness and harmony in the Subregion.

85. In the GMS, migration is inevitable because the determinants of migration are primarily structural. Social and economic indicators show – quite compellingly – that the Subregion as a whole benefits from labour migration and that it will in fact remain necessary for sustained growth and development (Ray and others, forthcoming). While there are few controls in the Subregion to restrict intra-regional migration, only a few initiatives seek to facilitate it. Facilitating regular labour migration entails establishing a regulatory framework and a system of incentives for the migrants or potential migrants.

86. As most of the GMS economies are all signatories to the Cebu Declaration and there is already consensus on some important labour migration issues, this cooperative spirit could be the starting point for formulating a GMS framework or plan of action on labour migration. Such steps would necessitate outlining the priorities and objectives of the Subregion in terms of migration management and developing a plan of action (including a monitoring plan) to achieve the objectives. International development partners, including the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, IOM and ILO, among other international organizations and civil society, could play a valuable role in developing and supporting such a plan of action. As migration is a multidisciplinary issue, it is important to include a broad range of government ministries at the national level that could address issues related to aspects such as admission, stay and documentation migrants, labour migration and migration and health issues.

87. The Subregion could greatly benefit from regular intergovernmental dialogue on migration management and labour migration. The government counterparts and labour migration focal points concerned could be supported by international organizations in this process.

6.1 Possible areas of action

MOUs

88. The implementation of the existing MOUs could be reinvigorated through some of the following measures:

- Simplifying and making more accessible procedures that are easy to understand and follow for low-skilled migrant workers;
- Providing information about existing procedures, the benefits of regular migration and the risks of irregular migration;
- Reducing the costs related to: (a) passport issuance; (b) administrative fees; and (c) recruitment, making regular migration less expensive than irregular migration;
- Making more extensive nationality verification that could be supported by international organizations working with the Governments concerned and their nationals;
- Considering the issuance of temporary documents for undocumented migrants employed in destination countries;
- Considering the formulation of other subregional MOUs, bilaterally or multilaterally, between other countries including, for example, Viet Nam and Thailand; Viet Nam and Cambodia; PRC and the Lao PDR or Viet Nam as a means to strengthen regional arrangements;
- Enhancing the institutional capacity of government ministries to implement the MOUs and manage labour migration systems. Technical assistance could be provided by international organizations or the Governments of GMS economies;
- Providing migrants with greater protection in the destination countries, with demonstrated advantages to registered migrants as an incentive to the migrants to register.

Regulation of recruitment agencies and employers

- National legislation should require penalties or sanctions against employers hiring irregular migrant workers; where such provisions already exist, they should be strictly enforced. This may require strengthening and building the capacity of labour inspection departments;
- The recruitment process of migrant workers should be better regulated in order to ensure that it is fair, transparent and cost-effective for the migrant and the employer and that the workers being recruited meet the market needs of the country concerned;
- Sectors that are known to employ large numbers of migrant workers, such as domestics, but are not recognized by government authorities should be recognized and regulated.

Information systems, contracts and skills

- Labour market information systems should be improved and labour market information shared within the region;
- Recruitment agencies and employers should be encouraged to use standard employment contracts. These contracts should be in the language of the migrant workers and their rights and obligations explained to them before they are deployed;
- Work should be initiated towards regional recognition of skills and qualifications, particularly in sectors that employ large number of migrants.

Forward-looking migration policies

- Establish clear labour market policies based on real sectoral needs that take into account the fact that migration in the GMS will continue at least for the foreseeable future;
- Establish clear migration management strategies for the GMS, including labour mobility, in order to support increased regional competitiveness and promote development that is consistent and harmonized with broader ASEAN objectives and goals;
- Carry out more research about migration from the PRC to the other GMS countries and from Viet Nam to the PRC and the Lao PDR in order to fill existing gaps in information;
- Disseminate information to migrants about their rights and responsibilities, and to host communities about labour migration issues and concerns.

Remittances

- Promote the establishment of cost-effective remittance systems by the private sector;
- Improve the understanding of remittance investment patterns by migrants;
- Assess the effectiveness and flaws as well as costs of money transfer channels;
- Compare the amounts of and expenditure remittances between regular and irregular migrants and the impacts on their dependants;
- Provide financial education/training and opportunities for income-generation activities or small business start-up to recipients of remittances.

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Appendix

GMS migrant workers registered in Thailand by country, sector and sex

Type of business	Number of employers	Total from the three countries	Myanmar			Lao PDR			Cambodia		
			Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	157,200	535,732	489,282	263,572	225,710	21,659	10,175	11,484	24,791	15,447	9,344
Fishing boats	3,371	14,892	10,365	8,739	1,626	644	487	157	3,883	3,289	594
Fishery processing	3,908	67,612	65,851	28,351	37,500	270	131	139	1,491	868	623
Agriculture	32,894	101,457	92,599	58,267	34,332	4,262	2,655	1,607	4,596	2,833	1,763
Rice mill	904	4,752	4,508	3,351	1,193	71	47	24	173	129	44
Brick factory	763	3,173	3,021	1,952	1,069	97	53	44	55	38	17
Ice plant	895	3,743	3,309	2,648	661	197	147	50	237	163	74
Transport	203	971	908	704	204	10	9	1	53	46	7
Construction	15,196	82,887	76,848	48,267	28,581	1,754	1,116	638	4,285	2,893	1,392
Mining	263	1,014	961	624	337	24	8	16	29	19	10
Domestic	50,041	61,328	53,180	9,808	43,372	6,046	1,067	4,979	2,102	513	1,589
Others	48,762	193,903	177,732	100,897	76,835	8,284	4,455	3,829	7,887	4,656	3,231

Source: Office of Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Employment, Thai Ministry of Labour, 2008.