



## 12th ADBI-OECD-ILO Roundtable on Labor Migration in Asia Recovering from COVID-19: What does it mean for labor migration in Asia?

Jointly organized by:

**Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI)**  
**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**  
**International Labour Organization (ILO)**

**24-25 May 2022**

Pullman Bangkok King Power  
8-2 Rang Nam Alley, Thanon Phaya Thai, Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400, Thailand

[Online / In-person](#)

24 May 2022, Tuesday	
8:30 – 9:00	<b>Registration and sign-up for in-person participants</b>
9:00 – 9:10	<b>Welcoming Remarks</b> <i>Tetsushi Sonobe, Dean &amp; CEO, Asian Development Bank Institute</i>
9:10 – 10:10	<b>SESSION 1: LABOR MIGRATION TRENDS AND POLICIES IN ASIA</b> <i>This session will focus on recent trends in migration and its governance at regional and global levels as well as remittances flows in the region. Questions addressed in this session include: What are the main global trends in international migration, in terms of channels, their magnitude and direction? How have flows resumed after the suspension during the pandemic? How have remittance flows been affected by changing labor markets and opportunities in destination economies? How has the Global Compact on Migration influenced policy and practices?</i>  Session Chair: <b>Peter Morgan</b> , Senior Consulting Economist and Advisor to the Dean, ADBI  Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Jean-Christophe Dumont</b>, Head, International Migration Division, OECD</li><li>• <b>Nilim Baruah</b>, Senior Regional Labour Migration Specialist, Decent Work Team, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ILO</li><li>• <b>Pitchaya Sirivunnabood</b>, Capacity Building and Training Economist, ADBI</li></ul>
10:10 – 10:30	<b>Q&amp;A</b>
10:30 – 10:50	<b>Group photo and Coffee break</b>

10:50 – 11:50	<p><b>SESSION 2: RECENT CHANGES IN LABOR MIGRATION TRENDS AND POLICIES IN ASIA</b></p> <p><i>This session looks at recent changes in the management of labor migration in Asia, including deployment and recruitment, and associated policy developments.</i></p> <p><i>Each delegate will have the opportunity to present the main trends in 2020-2021, especially noting the impact of Covid-19 on inflows and outflows of labor migrants, and the extent to which they have returned to pre-pandemic levels.</i></p> <p><i>More broadly, presentations cover the gender issues in labor migration, including different impacts of the pandemic on women and men migrant workers.</i></p> <p><i>Countries presenting in this session, in addition to presenting the latest trends in labor migration from (and to) their countries, will also discuss recent regulatory changes they have implemented to deal with the challenges and to better govern and manage labor migration. Presentations will highlight new laws, mechanisms or international agreements signed as well as bilateral labor migration agreements negotiated.</i></p> <p>Session Chair: <b>Pitchaya Sirivunnabood</b>, ADBI</p> <p>Country presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bangladesh:</b> Quazi Arefin Rezoane, Senior Assistant Secretary, Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance</li> <li>• <b>Sri Lanka :</b> Kanthasamy Nikarilkanth, Senior Assistant Secretary (Development), State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Market Diversification</li> <li>• <b>Pakistan:</b> Muhammad Tahir Noor, Director General, Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development</li> <li>• <b>Nepal:</b> Shesh Narayan Paudel, Director General, Department of Foreign Employment, Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security</li> <li>• <b>India:</b> Dr. H. Srinivas, Director General, V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, Ministry of Labour and Employment</li> </ul>
11:50 – 12:20	<b>Open Discussion</b>
12:20 – 13:15	<b>Lunch</b>
13:15 – 13:55	<p><b>SESSION 2: RECENT CHANGES IN LABOR MIGRATION TRENDS AND POLICIES (Continued)</b></p> <p>Country presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Japan:</b> Yu Korekawa, Director for International Research and Cooperation, National Institute of Population and Social Security Research</li> <li>• <b>Malaysia :</b> YBhg. Datuk Muhd Khair Razman bin Mohamed Annuar, Deputy Secretary General (Operations), Ministry of Human Resources, and; Raziman bin Joraimi, Assistant Secretary, Policy Division, Ministry of Human Resources</li> <li>• <b>Indonesia:</b> Muhammad Ichwanuddin Muchsin, Cooperation Analyst, Directorate of Productivity Development, Ministry of Manpower</li> <li>• <b>Thailand:</b> Thanadej Panyawiwattanakorn, Labour Specialist, Professional Level, Department of Employment</li> </ul>
13:55 – 14:10	<b>Open Discussion</b>
14:10 – 15:00	<p><b>SESSION 2: RECENT CHANGES IN LABOR MIGRATION TRENDS AND POLICIES (CONCLUSION)</b></p> <p>Country presentations:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cambodia:</b> Thorng Samon, Deputy Director General, Directorate General of Technical Vocational Education and Training, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training</li> <li>• <b>Philippines:</b> Edgardo S. Aranjuez II, OIC-Assistant Director, National Economic and Development Authority</li> <li>• <b>PRC:</b> Shi Lei, Deputy Director, Department of Employment Promotion, Ministry of Human Resource and Social Security</li> <li>• <b>Lao PDR:</b> Soukkhy Luangvised, Technical Officer, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare</li> </ul>
15:00 – 15:30	<b>Open Discussion</b>
15:30 – 15:45	<b>Coffee Break</b>
15:45 – 16:15	<p><b>SESSION 3: NEW PROFILES OF DEMAND FOR ASIAN MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC)</b></p> <p><i>Even before the pandemic, major destination regions for Asian labor migrants were undergoing structural shifts in demand and political changes in their approach to meeting labor needs.</i></p> <p><i>This session will present the current and expected profile of demand in the main destination for Asian labor migrants – the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Post-pandemic recovery programs including major infrastructure projects, for example, may affect demand. Policies to reduce reliance on migrant workers have been operating for years with little overall effect on demand. Recent spikes in oil and gas prices, if they persist, may fuel more growth and more demand. What the changes to the kafala system (and other reforms) may mean in terms of changes in the number and profile of workers?</i></p> <p><i>To explore these questions, the keynote speaker will discuss how GCC migrant worker demand is changing and what trends Asian origin countries should be following in order to foresee future opportunities – in terms of numbers, skills profiles and governance.</i></p> <p>Session Chair: <b>Jean-Christophe Dumont</b>, OECD</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Françoise De Bel-Air</b>, Senior Fellow, Gulf Labour Markets, Migration and Population Programme (GLMM)</li> <li>• <b>Shaikha Al Khater</b>, Director, International Relations Department, Ministry of Labour, Qatar</li> </ul>
16:15 – 16:30	<b>Open Discussion</b>
16:30 – 17:00	<p><b>SESSION 4: POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE: HOW WILL THEY AFFECT MIGRATION OPPORTUNITIES FROM ASIAN COUNTRIES?</b></p> <p><i>Most migration from Asian countries remains within the region or towards OECD countries in North America. Europe – and particularly the 27 countries making up the European Union – is a minor destination. Most EU countries set no limits on international recruitment of skilled migrant workers, but see relatively few participants. Yet recent policy initiatives in European countries and at the EU level aim to make Europe more attractive for skilled workers looking for employment abroad.</i></p> <p><i>While the EU itself does not grant visas or residence permits – this is the responsibility of individual member states – it does influence the policy settings. The EU Blue Card – the residence permit for highly qualified workers – was revised in 2021 and will lead to more favorable stay conditions for skilled migrant workers in all participating EU member states. The EU has also launched a series of initiatives to “attract skills and talents to the EU”. The next few years will see the development, for example, of a new public matching platform for skilled potential migrants.</i></p>

	<p><i>This session will present some of the main EU-level policy developments. Participants will have the chance to discuss how this may affect the landscape for labor migration in their countries, including educational investments such as language or specific skills sought in EU countries.</i></p> <p>Session Chair: <b>Jonathan Chaloff</b>, International Migration Division, OECD</p> <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dianne Angermüller</b>, Legal Pathways and Integration Unit, DG Home Affairs and Migration, European Commission</li> </ul>
17:00– 17:15	<b>Open Discussion</b>
18:30 – 20:30	<b>Dinner Reception</b>

## 25 May 2022, Wednesday

09:00 – 10:15

### SESSION 5: CHANGING DEPLOYMENT PROTOCOLS AND TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

*Deployment protocols have changed due to the pandemic. Even when the health situation has improved, new practices and document requirements are likely to remain in place.*

*This session will examine how processes have changed. The results of a survey by ADB will be presented for the first time. Issues covered in the survey and in this session include health protocols and additional costs, government-to-government negotiation of “travel bubbles”, recognition of vaccination documents, or G2G agreements on categories of mobility. Changes in bilateral agreements to incorporate procedures for return and quarantine will also be covered. Concerns of workers and employers will be discussed as well good practices in the resumption of labor migration.*

*Unilateral government measures such as repatriation registries and Covid-related social protection issues will be discussed. Arrangements such as conventions for private health checks or new forms of private individual insurance may also be discussed.*

Session Chair: **Nilim Baruah**, ILO

Speakers:

- **Aiko Kikkawa Takenaka**, Economist, ERCD, ADB
- **Seori Choi**, Senior Policy Researcher, Migration Research and Training Centre, Korea
- **Wai Luen Terence Ho**, Associate Professor, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, General resumption of labour migration

10:15 – 10:30

Open Discussion

10:30 – 11:00

**Coffee Break**

11:00 – 12:15

### SESSION 6: AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

*The pandemic put the spotlight on essential workers in agriculture, where labor needs persisted and the restrictions on mobility led to critical bottlenecks in production. However, this sector is one of the main sectors of employment of migrant workers, from small farming operations in Thailand, Korea and Japan, to plantations in Malaysia, to seasonal work in many OECD countries.*

*This session discusses the latest developments in the sector and their implications for labor migration. The sector is undergoing technological change but continues to demand workers, while requiring little education and training. The policy environment is also changing, with a number of OECD countries introducing bilateral agreements for managing seasonal work migration, or introducing new channels. Further, there are persistent decent work deficits in the agricultural sector - including in occupational safety and health and social security benefits. The session discusses how to address these challenges.*

Session Chair: **Pitchaya Sirivunnabood**, ADBI

Speakers:

- PALM and the developments of Australian policy for workers in the agricultural sector: **Stephen Howes**, Director, Development Policy Centre, Australian National University
- Japan's TITP and SSW in agriculture: **Yu Korekawa**, Director for International Research and Cooperation, National Institute of Population and Social Security Research
- Temporary Agricultural Programmes in Europe: **Jonathan Chaloff**, OECD

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wage protection and social security for agricultural workers in Malaysia: <b>YBhg. Datuk Muhd Khair Razman bin Mohamed Annuar</b>, Deputy Secretary General (Operations), Ministry of Human Resources, and <b>Raziman bin Joraimi</b>, Assistant Secretary, Policy Division, Ministry of Human Resources</li> <li>The BLA for Agricultural Workers in Israel: <b>Shoshana Strauss</b>, Population, Immigration and Border Authority</li> </ul>
12:15 – 12:30	<b>Open Discussion</b>
12:30 – 13:15	<b>Lunch</b>
13:15 – 14:30	<p><b>SESSION 7: SUPPORT FOR REPATRIATION AND REINTEGRATION OF PANDEMIC RETURNEES</b></p> <p><i>For many of the countries of origin of labor migrants in Asia, 2020 was a year of organizing repatriation flights and supporting returning workers. The region has not yet returned to its pre-pandemic deployment levels, so many workers who returned have been unable to resume overseas employment.</i></p> <p><i>This session will cover the lessons learned from the repatriation exercise and highlight effective practice for supporting labor migrants who returned prematurely from their country of employment. Support may range from creation of repatriation registries and organization of charter flights to post-return support.</i></p> <p><i>From the destination country perspective, the session will cover measures to extend permits for migrant workers already in the country, as well as extension of eligibility for migrants who were on selection lists - or with work permits approved before the pandemic - but who were unable to migrate due to border closures or travel restrictions.</i></p> <p>Session Chair: <b>Shabari Nair</b>, Regional Labour Migration Specialist, Decent Work Team for South Asia and Country Office India, ILO</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India: Dr. H. Srinivas, Director General, V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, Ministry of Labour and Employment</li> <li>Sri Lanka: <b>Gamini Senarath Yapa</b>, Deputy General Manager, Training &amp; Recruitment, Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment</li> <li><b>Peppi Kiviniemi-Siddiq</b>, Senior Regional Protection Specialist, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, International Organization for Migration</li> <li><b>Geoffrey Ducanes</b>, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Ateneo De Manila University, the Philippines, and consultant to ASEAN Secretariat</li> </ul>
14:30 – 14:45	<b>Open Discussion</b>
14:45 – 15:00	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <p>ADBI</p> <p>ILO</p> <p>OECD</p>