

International Migrants Day Conference 2022: New Trends and Prevailing Issues in Migration

The International Migrants' Day (IMD) Conference 2022 was held on-site in Chulalongkorn University and online ([Part I](#) & [Part II](#)). Hosted annually by the Asian Research Center for Migration (ARCM-CE), last year's conference was held in close partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC). The conference brought together academics, researchers, multilateral and regional organisations, and civil society to discuss a broad range of migration-related themes in Thailand, Southeast Asia and further afield. The overall objectives were to provide both breadth and depth of the latest trends and persisting issues regarding migrant populations, to exchange knowledge, and develop networks among policy makers, practitioners and scholars working in the migration fields.

This policy brief outlines emerging and prevailing issues, analyses and provides recommendations to address key challenges in the following areas concerning migration and migrant populations: 1) new trends in forced migration, 2) seasonal labour in Thailand's agriculture, 3) labour migration in the blue economy, 4) ageing societies and care work, and 5) environment, climate change and migration.

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New Trends in Forced Migration

The Asia Pacific is one of the largest migration destinations where 40 per cent of international migrants (including refugees) originate from this region and 25 per cent reside in this region ([ESCAP 2020](#), pp.25-29). Further, 70 per cent of migrants in Asia and the Pacific come from within the region (*ibid*, p.31). The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) opened this session by canvassing the mounting complexities in situations that compel people to move. Advancing human rights-centred legal protections for all migrant populations as the OHCHR points out, importantly, requires moving away from simplistic framings of migrants as "voluntary" or "involuntary" and deepening our understanding of the multi-dimensional and intersecting drivers and motivations to move.

Turning to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Professor Elzbieta Gozdzia from Adam Mickiewicz University observed the unequal treatment of displaced populations at the Polish borders. While forcibly displaced Ukrainians have been welcomed in Poland, populations fleeing protracted conflicts in countries such as Syria,

Afghanistan and Yemen have been consistently denied in their attempts to cross from neighbouring Belarus into Poland to seek safety and claim asylum. Prof. Gozdzia's research demonstrated OHCHR's earlier comments on the need to pay closer attention to how contextual and structural discriminations rooted in race, religion and culture can perpetuate migrant vulnerabilities to result in tragic outcomes. Moreover, to ensure the sustainable resettlement of Ukrainian refugees in Poland who are currently hosted by ordinary people and civil society, longer-term policies for housing and employment are essential.

Next, Professor Ahsan Ullah from the University of Brunei Darussalam highlighted the protracted displacement of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh, which includes around 480,000 of whom are second and third generation. The Rohingyas remain stateless, lack national identity cards, and are in limbo between Myanmar and Bangladesh. Professor Ullah's research examines the identities of the younger Rohingyas and found that their sense of "in-betweenness" leads to isolation and marginalisation, which in turn gives rise to mental health issues, such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression, negatively impacting on all aspects of life. Overcoming the Rohingyas' socio-legal identity crisis necessitates sustained efforts from humanitarian actors.

[The Border Consortium](#) (TBC) focused on the civil war and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar since the military seized power after the 1 February 2021 coup. In Myanmar, delivery of international humanitarian assistance has been obstructed by the military regime. Aid has not reached those most in urgent need, particularly populations in the rural areas where military attacks are targeting civilians to undermine the armed resistance. Consequently, the TBC estimates that in addition to approximately 1.5 million undocumented Myanmar migrants already in Thailand, an influx of 40,000 people have been displaced into Thailand and 50,000 remain internally displaced along the borders of Myanmar since the 2021 coup, with little durable solutions in sight. Although Thailand is neither a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol, the Royal Thai Government recently approved the [Regulation of the Office of the Prime Minister on the Screening of Aliens who Enter into the Kingdom and are Unable to Return to the Country of Origin B.E. 2562](#), which outlines a national screening mechanism to protect foreign people from unsafe repatriation, and is as a step in a positive direction.

The keynote address by Professor Matthew Gibney from the University of Oxford reinforced the urgency to address the inadequacies in international laws and migration frameworks that fail to respond to the rising numbers of forced migrants and complexities in forced displacement situations. Prof Gibney proposed four ethical and complementary approaches that seek to re-centre the responsibilities of states in assisting forced migrants. These state-led approaches are based on principles related to humanitarianism, shared identities (e.g. religion, regional and ethnicity), reparative justice (e.g. in accepting those fleeing from former colonies as a manner to address historical injustices), and state system legitimacy (i.e. if the modern state system is to be considered and remain legitimate, states must take responsibility and guarantee human rights protection for all). These approaches are already in practice to varying degrees and they invite us – international and state policy makers, law enforcement authorities, humanitarian actors and researchers – to re-imagine how

we can extend protections and justice for all forced migrants through ethical and innovative pathways to rectify the current constraints of international migration treaties and frameworks.

Recommendations:

- ⇒ Following human rights-based governance of international migration outlined in the 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Objectives 2, 5 and 7 and the 1948 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, **all states should pursue ethical, innovative and complementary pathways to existing legal channels for migration to protect all migrant populations, particularly factoring in the intersecting and complex drivers of migration.**
- ⇒ Cooperation between receiving states, multilateral organisations and civil society is required to achieve **sustainable resettlement solutions for Ukrainian refugees**, which should compose of longer-term support, including housing, employment and social services.
- ⇒ Since the conditions are not conducive to voluntary repatriation back to Myanmar, **the Royal Thai Government, multilateral organisations and civil society should enhance protection for Myanmar displaced people in Thailand** and widen access to education, skills training and legal employment, and re-start third country resettlement.
- ⇒ Humanitarian actors should promote the sharing of Rohingya cultural values and heritage through **storytelling, education and cultural events** to enable young Rohingyas to internalise and express their individual and collective identity.
- ⇒ To build resilience among young Rohingyas, host states and humanitarian actors should provide **psychosocial support** to prevent and address mental health issues that may also be tied to direct and inter-generational trauma.

Seasonal Labour in Thailand's Agriculture Sector

Agriculture has historically been the backbone of the Thai economy and increasingly, this sector is reliant on migrant workers to fill the growing labour shortages. Despite forming a critical workforce, [a study by The Institute for Population and Social Research's Mahidol University Migration Center \(IPSR-MMC\)](#) and ILO's TRIANGLE in ASEAN program found that many agricultural migrant workers are excluded from national labour protection laws. Agriculture work is typically short-term (3 to 9 months) and migrant workers move between multiple employers, are paid daily wages or piece rates, and categorised as independent contractors. Thailand's Labour Protection Act B.E.2541 (1998), the Ministerial Regulation concerning Labour Protection in Agricultural Work B.E.2557 (2014) and the Social Security Act B.E.2533 (1990) have legislative voids that create and amplify risks and vulnerabilities among migrant labourers, specifically those who work year-round in this sector. Study participants in the rubber, palm oil, sugarcane and maize industries often face indebtedness and wage deductions, using loans to finance legal documentation and fall victim to debt bondage; they experience unstable and/or temporary employment; receive low wages; suffer hazardous, unhealthy work and poor living conditions (particularly access to clean water, sanitation and appropriate housing); and limited access to social security and medical services.

Downstream in the agricultural supply chain, ILO's Safe and Fair program's assessment of the rubber and palm oil agro-processing in Malaysia and Thailand outlined prevalent gender-based discriminations and inequalities. Gender differences are found in recruitment modes and payments, with women paying higher recruitment fees but less reliant on brokers than men. The reinforcement of gender norms in workplace practices, in turn, contributes to perpetuating gender pay gap. Women migrant workers face additional challenges, including gender-based violence and limited access to maternal, sexual and reproductive health-related information and services. Furthermore, women workers tend to be concentrated in small and medium enterprises, which are often overlooked in labour protection inspections. Women working upstream in agriculture work longer hours to achieve similar payment amounts to that of men because employers assume that women cannot harvest as much as men. Likewise, division of labour and responsibilities are gendered in the agro-processing sector with men and women experiencing discrimination and harassment based on nationality and gender; they have insufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) and occupational and health (OHS) training; and may not realise their rights to voice their grievances or face issues with complaint mechanisms.

Thailand's 2017 Royal Ordinance on the Management of Foreign Workers was introduced to formalise labour importation from neighbouring countries and tighten penalties for irregular migrant workers, but the net effects of regularisation on the welfare of migrant workers are not yet well understood. Section 64 Border Employment Scheme concerns temporary or seasonal work in Thailand's border provinces and requires migrant workers to pass a medical examination, pay registration fees and obtain a Thai work permit. Dr. Aungkha Kamonpetch from ARCM-CE and Professor Koji Kubo from Gakushuin University, Japan, highlighted in their

research that informal border employment practices are readily drawn upon and serve to augment the welfare of irregular seasonal Cambodian migrant workers in the longan fruit export industry in Chanthaburi province. While Section 64 Border Employment Scheme opened a way for migrants to engage in temporary agricultural labour in border areas formally, this work permit procedure is incompatible with the fluid employment in seasonal agricultural work. A local trade association initiated an informal employment management system called the “Pong Nam Ron model”, which provides an effective middle ground among local authorities, employers, and migrant workers. Since the Thai borders re-opened following the COVID-19 pandemic, increased pressure for stringent implementation of the Section 64 Border Pass raises concerns of added financial burdens on seasonal migrant workers.

The use of alternative border crossing mechanisms through local arrangements was similarly observed by Gavan Blau and Wipawadee Panyangnoi in [Winrock International](#)'s study on the migration patterns and rights of Cambodian seasonal workers along Thailand's border provinces. Various alternative immigration ID cards issued by provincial and community-level authorities, such as the army security “tahan card” and “IM-card” in Sa Kaeo province, have enabled seasonal Cambodian workers to pass through unofficial border crossings and circumvent the time-consuming and restrictive requirements of the existing Section 64 Border Pass. Specifically, the Section 64 Border Pass requires migrant workers to enter and leave at official border crossing points and renew visa stamps every 30 days, which impacts seasonal migrant workers by imposing extra fees, travel and administration, while also restricting their mobility. Additionally, the Border Pass only lasts 90 days, which is commonly shorter than the harvesting season. These alternative local schemes operating in the border provinces are embedded in long-standing transborder social and economic relationships, which also serve as conduits for recruitment, support and information flows.

Recommendations¹

- ⇒ **Amendments should be made to Thailand's 2017 Royal Ordinance Concerning the Management of Employment of Foreign Workers** to recognise and protect highly mobile seasonal migrant labourers who work for multiple employers and receive multiple modes of payment (i.e. day wages and piece rate). High mobility among agricultural workers further warrants enhanced and portability of legal and social protections.
- ⇒ **Amendments should be made to the Ministerial Regulation concerning Labour Protection in Agricultural Work** so that the key Labour Protection Act protections cover all workers in agriculture.
- ⇒ **Improve safe and regular migration in agriculture by reducing time and costs, regularising in-country work permit renewals and simplifying processes, including better monitoring, enforcement and**

¹ Arranged collection from conference presentations by ARCM-CE and for ILO Recommendations see: Working and employment conditions in the agriculture sector in Thailand: A survey of migrant workers on Thai sugarcane, rubber, oil palm and maize farms. Thailand: ILO Available: https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_844317/lang--en/index.htm

information dissemination. This will reduce additional fees borne by migrant workers who rely on intermediaries and document brokers.

- ⇒ **Section 64 Border Pass should be extended to other border and non-border areas (e.g. those bordering Lao PDR).** The accompanying 30-day visa stamp is too short a period, which creates work disruptions for migrant workers or requires them to depend on intermediaries (i.e. document brokers) to obtain visa stamps every 30 days and consequently, incurring additional fees.
- ⇒ **The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) migration agreements with Thailand's neighbouring countries should be reviewed to ensure flexibility and accessibility for migrant workers in agriculture with year-round employment.** Also, the total term of MOU work permit, which is currently limited to 2 years (with 2 additional years upon renewal), should be extended. This will increase worker retention, decrease worker precarity, and increase regularisation in an extremely vulnerable work sector like agriculture.
- ⇒ **Labour protection inspection should be gender-sensitive and extend to checking registration process and procedures, as well as working and living conditions,** including oversight of recruitment agencies and other intermediaries, to eliminate costly brokerage and recruitment fees; to identify gender-based violence in the workplace and residence.
- ⇒ **Gender-based discriminations and inequalities in the agriculture supply chain must be addressed by** closing the gender pay gap; national laws should remove the discriminatory practice of compulsory pregnancy testing of women migrant workers; ensuring migration and gender-related services are better integrated.
- ⇒ **Relevant ministries, workplace inspectorates and employers must regularly review occupational health and safety procedures** to ensure all migrant workers are provided with safety briefing in languages they understand; sufficient PPE, decent housing and amenities, clean water access and sanitation; and be gender-sensitive (e.g. improving safe access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services and products).
- ⇒ **Host states must improve migrant workers' access to justice by ensuring their rights to freedom of association, inclusion in collective bargaining and enhancing the operations of complaint mechanisms.** Increase migrant workers' options for redress and make existing complaints mechanisms more accessible, including improving translation and ethnic language interpretation support and cross-border support.

Labour Migration in the Blue Economy

The Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188) (C188) sets out legally binding requirements relating to work and living conditions on board fishing vessels, including occupational safety and health, adequate food and water, medical care at sea and ashore, rest periods, written work agreements and social security protection

in the fishing sector. Thailand is the first Asian country to ratify C188, demonstrating its commitment to improve the lives and livelihoods of migrant workers in the fishing sector who continue to experience significant decent work deficits and human rights violations.

The Ship to Shore Rights South East Asia baseline survey was conducted to develop an evidence base on the current spectrum of migrant working conditions in the fishing and seafood processing sectors in order to identify the key gaps in labour protection. The survey revealed significant regional differences in the use of formal (e.g. Indonesian and Vietnamese workers) and informal (e.g. Cambodian and Myanmar workers) migration channels. In addition, most migrant workers are charged migration-related fees in countries of origin and destination, even though the international labour standards set out in Conventions such as C188 (Article 22) and the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181) (Article 7) clearly stipulate that workers should not be charged directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or other costs for recruitment. High recruitment fees often force migrant workers to take out loans and enter a cycle of debt, e.g. among Vietnamese migrants. The debts in turn can restrict migrant workers' ability to leave abusive or exploitative employment situations.

The majority of migrant workers in the fishing and seafood processing sectors said that their jobs were the same or better than promised but a significant portion did report that the conditions were worse, particularly among Indonesian and Cambodian migrants at 19% and 10% respectively. In most cases, this related to working longer hours or more days than had been stated in their contracts but many migrants also reported being placed in entirely different jobs than they had agreed upon. Other areas that remain of concern are excessive working hours and inadequate rest time, particularly in the fishing industry, which increases the risk of workplace injuries and accidents as a result of fatigue. In addition, the study found a significant prevalence of forced labour remaining in fishing sector, particularly on Chinese, Taiwanese and Thai-flagged fishing vessels. Key risk factors for forced labour were found to include recruitment cost deducted from salaries; paying fees in countries of origin; use of an unlicensed broker; discriminatory employment practices; getting paid in lump sum salary payments (3 months or longer); and excessive work hours.

An independent assessment was conducted for the Seafood Good Labour Practices (GLP) initiative – a voluntary scheme to promote compliance with Thai labour laws and international labour standards among export-oriented seafood processing factories. The study found that while the GLP scheme provides a sense of ownership among participating companies; a space to exchange ideas and knowledge, and the opportunity to obtain specific advice on improving compliance, there are many challenges remaining. The GLP reporting process needs to be more impartial and transparent in assessing compliance with national laws. Although women migrant workers comprise a large proportion of the workforce, many workplace policies remain gender blind. The promotion of freedom of association and collective bargaining has achieved limited progress, resulting from weak linkages with workers' organisations and civil society organisations (CSOs). Lastly, the

GLP initiative has a narrow focus on the higher tiers of the seafood supply chain, rather than adopting a more comprehensive approach to drive positive change.

Centering the voices of Cambodian and Myanmar migrant fishers, the [Fishers Rights Network](#) (FRN) highlighted varying forms of human and labour rights abuses that prevail in the Thai fisheries, regardless of vessel size or if the vessel is at sea, due to ineffective enforcement of laws and regulations. To improve fundamental rights at work, FRN outlined the pressing need to raise the minimum wage, provide access to basic first aid training and equip all vessels with comprehensive medical kits on board, end document retention, provide written contracts in migrants' languages, enable FoA and the right to collective bargaining, and freedom of movement to change employers.

Finally, IOM emphasised that increased risks of human trafficking is associated with hazardous and extremely poor working conditions. ASEAN Member States lack a regional legislative and regulatory environment with only Thailand that has ratified C188 Work in Fishing Convention, hindering the promotion of regular and safe labour migration and decent work for migrant fishers. Complexities abound in combatting human trafficking, such as difficulties in labour inspection and monitoring for compliance to laws when fishing vessels are out in the high seas for extended periods. Smaller-sized vessels and companies in the lower tiers of the supply chain operate in a less regulated environment and lack awareness on industry labour and human rights standards. Further, migrant workers on board vessels are typically isolated and rescue efforts at sea are delayed by complex jurisdictions, requiring coordination between multiple state and non-state actors and agencies.

Recommendations:

- ⇒ **Rigorously enforce the legally binding requirements enshrined in the Work in Fishing Convention 2007 (C188) to protect the labour rights of migrant fishers** and provide decent work and living conditions on board fishing vessels.
- ⇒ **Strengthen the implementation of the GLP program through increased independence and transparency** in tracking and reporting on progress in meeting the GLP standards, including through engaging CSOs and worker organisations.
- ⇒ **Improve occupational safety and health in both fishing and seafood processing workplaces** by providing safety training, offering employer-provided personal protective equipment, increasing compliance through labour inspection and expanding access to medical care.
- ⇒ **Improve living and working standards on board commercial fishing vessels**, including through providing migrant fishers with written contracts in languages which migrants can understand, ensuring labour and social protection laws are effectively enforced, increasing the minimum wage, providing adequate food and drinking water, and improving access to first aid kits and personal protective equipment.

- ⇒ **Expand worker organising among migrant fishing and seafood processing workers** through reform of the Labour Relations Act to allow migrant workers to form their own trade unions and supporting workers' organisations and CSOs to promote their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining.
- ⇒ **Increase the freedom of migrant workers to change their employment**, as established in the Dhaka Principles for Migration with Dignity, to enable migrant workers to leave abusive and exploitative employment situations by ensuring their right to stay and work in destination countries is not tied to a specific employer.
- ⇒ **Combat human trafficking in the fishing and seafood processing sectors**, including through providing swift assistance and justice for victims through multi-stakeholder partnerships (i.e. international and regional bodies, governments, NGOs, and private sector), strengthening national/transnational referral mechanisms to screen, identify and assist victims of trafficking, and harmonise anti-trafficking laws and regulations between origin, transit and destination countries.
- ⇒ **Improve connectivity and communications at sea** through technological solutions and leverage on migrant workers' familial and extended social networks to raise awareness and share vital informational resources on forced labour, human trafficking and assistance services for their family members and friends at sea.

Ageing Societies and Care Work

As countries in the Asia Pacific become rapidly ageing and ageing-in-place is the cultural expectation, there is increasing reliance on migrant workers in aged care work. Research undertaken in Singapore by the Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics (HOME) shows that 1 in 5 households with an elderly person aged 65 and above relies on a migrant domestic worker (MDW) ([HOME & AWARE 2020²](#), p.3). Employers generally recruit MDWs based on transversal and attitudinal skills, resulting in skills mismatched with care recipient needs. Despite legislative measures stipulated in Singapore's Employment Act and Employment of Foreign Manpower Act, in practice, MDWs are overworked since elderly home care can be round the clock and they are required to undertake additional household chores and duties. Singapore's Employer-tied Work Permit system, including restrictions on switching employers, leverages employers' power, which tend to result in MDWs not reporting abusive or exploitative working and living conditions.

Echoing HOME's research, survey findings by the ILO's TRIANGLE in ASEAN program found that migrant domestic workers in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore are often seen as "low skilled" even though they perform a range of work duties, including childcare and elderly care, and that these additional skills are in fact defined at a "medium skills" level (ISCO Level 2) under the International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO-08). Consequently, domestic workers work long hours, are inadequately compensated and their skills continue to be unrecognised.

² HOME & AWARE (2020). *Neither Family Nor Employee: the caregiver burden of migrant domestic workers in Singapore*. Singapore: AWARE.

In Australia, a country that has a long history of culturally and linguistically diverse permanent migrant settlement, Dr. Catriona Stevens from Edith Cowan University contends, institutional aged care delivery is limited to models of health care inherited from its British colonial past. Current data also fails to adequately capture the diversity in Australia's aged and disability care workforce, which hinders efforts to create culturally safe workplaces where diverse approaches to caring can be understood and valued. Dr. Stevens calls for policy responses to reform current models of care provision to better accommodate the needs of two vulnerable populations, that of culturally diverse older Australians as well as migrant care workers.

Dr. Ruttiya Bhula-or from Population Studies at Chulalongkorn University shared her [research findings](#)³ from Thailand on the little known trend of internal migration of elderly Thais to seek care. While migration decisions are influenced by the elderly's health status, income, gender and other interacting factors (e.g. job flexibility of the caregiver), intergenerational support remain important as family members provide and receive care to minimise family expenses and share responsibility.

Recommendations:

- ⇒ **Host states should strengthen legislative measures to ensure MDWs are entitled to well-defined number of rest hours to prevent overwork and burn-out**, with the understanding that high retention of quality care workers is mutually beneficial for care recipients and their family members.
- ⇒ As public provision of care is inadequate and private provision of care is expected to rise, **host states should pursue professionalising live-in caregivers and home-care workers through skills training**². For example, develop a standard care needs matrix and accreditation system to certify MDW's skills and formalise skills recognition opportunities for domestic workers that consider years of experience and transversal skills.
- ⇒ **Host states in partnership with employment agencies and civil society should provide caregiving-specific information and emotional support to MDWs**. This can manage expectations, provide coping mechanisms for MDWs and empower them.
- ⇒ **States and care provider services should develop new models of care that are culturally-sensitive and responsive to both migrants working in aged care and care recipients who are increasingly culturally diverse**. This can be achieved by understanding migrants' perspectives, their experiences of migration, and their career histories and future aspirations, to improve worker retention and build sustainable and long-term care workforces.
- ⇒ **To support equitable ageing-in-place, states should develop policies that protect income and social security for family caregivers**, which can reduce financial and emotional stress for lower-income households.

³ Bhula-or, R., Chimmamee, M., Osatis, C.(2022). "Migration of older persons seeking care in Thailand", *Journal of Social Issues*, 78(3), pp.521-543.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12499>

Environment, Climate Change and Migration

Asia as a region faces high livelihood risks and displacement arising from the emerging threats and far-reaching impacts of environmental degradation, disasters, and encroachment of development processes (including “green” interventions, such as hydropower dams). Dr. Sara Vigil from the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI Asia) focused on the compounding vulnerabilities worsened by climate-related flux and political and economic dynamics, which in turn shapes international labour migration. Frequently, people whose pre-existing vulnerabilities are exacerbated by environmental and economic stressors (e.g. those dependent on natural resources-based livelihoods) move in search of viable alternative livelihoods. Dr Vigil argues, migrant workers’ lives may not greatly improve if they are subjected to cumbersome migration regulations, such as costly recruitment and documentation fees, in addition to precarious and exploitative working and living conditions that undermine migrants’ well-being. Consequently, many migrant workers suffer high social costs, which calls for a rethinking of migration as a “climate adaptation” strategy that must go beyond economic considerations to one that is rights centred and concerned with migrant workers’ overall well-being.

Extending our understanding that climate change has direct and indirect influences on human (im)mobility, Dayoon Kim from SEI Asia explores how conflict complicates the climate-migration nexus. The protracted conflict situations in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar have led to displaced populations dispersed in various transit and host countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia where they continue to be exposed to environmental risks together with socio-political marginalisation, such as limited access to livelihood assets. In the origin countries, ongoing conflict may also weaken institutions that work to minimise and to respond to climate risks. Moving forward, peacebuilding efforts must be integrated to respond to climate change impacts and vice versa. The report on environment-conflict-migration nexus, commissioned by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) can be found here: [Exploring the Environment-Conflict-Migration Nexus in Asia - SEI](#)⁴

The Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines in partnership with SEI Asia assessed [the impacts of protracted displacement in Tacloban caused by the 2013 Typhoon Haiyan to examine if durable solutions have been achieved](#)⁵ in the resettlement villages. Using the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Durable Solutions framework, the survey found that although the internally displaced people (IDPs) felt increased levels of personal safety, they had inadequate access to water, insecure land tenure and housing, limited employment and livelihood options, and low levels of engagement in public affairs within their new communities. Hence, bottom-up, consultative approaches that engage with forcibly displaced people can restore human dignity and security.

⁴ Vigil, S., Torre, A. R. and Kim, D. (2022). Exploring the environment-conflict-migration nexus in Asia. Danish Refugee Council and Stockholm Environment Institute, Copenhagen.

⁵ Tran, M. and Bermudez, R. (2022). *Durable Solutions for People Displaced by Typhoon Haiyan in Tacloban, Philippines*. SEI policy brief. Stockholm Environment Institute, Stockholm. <http://doi.org/10.51414/sei2022.050>

Lastly, striving to achieve equitable participation in climate actions, Dr Ratchada Jayagupta from ARCM-CE and Stefano Zenobi from the WWF-Greater Mekong presented the regional status of integrating gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) principles into climate action planning and implementation in five ASEAN Member States (Cambodia, Laos PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam). Differences in the level of GESI integration in climate actions was observed between countries, sectors, and administrative levels within countries. Marginalised populations, such as indigenous people, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, women and children, have a low level of participation in decision-making and leadership roles, which undermines the effectiveness of climate policy planning and implementation across the target countries.

Recommendations

- ⇒ **All states and their development partners must consider migration as a “climate adaptation” strategy that encompasses more than economic benefits (e.g. higher income and remittances) to that which secures migrants’ overall well-being through respect for human rights and protection of labour rights.**
- ⇒ Migration as a climate adaptation can only be enabled when there is sufficient state and development actors’ support for migrants in facilitating safe, orderly, and regular migration. **All States and their development partners must address pre-existing and new forms of climate vulnerabilities and inequities in the origin countries.**
- ⇒ Given that conflict-affected countries are highly vulnerable to climate impacts, **international, regional, national and local stakeholders** must recognise the complex and overlapping links between conflict, climate change and migration. **They should ensure peacebuilding interventions integrate climate adaptation and mitigation strategies**, rather than addressing conflict and climate change in silos.
- ⇒ **The Philippines Government should amend the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Law (DRRM) that draws on a rights-based approach**, particularly in relation to disaster displacement. This should include legal protection of IDPs. A law on the protection of the rights of IDPs should also be passed to further support IDP communities in their achievement of durable solutions.
- ⇒ **IDPs should be involved throughout the process of determining durable solutions** to ensure they have adequate access to basic needs, personal and group safety, livelihood opportunities, secure land tenure and property, and participation in public affairs in the areas of resettlement.
- ⇒ **ASEAN Member States and relevant development partners should establish a technical working group to mainstream GESI into climate actions.** The working group should develop a monitoring and evaluation framework with measurable indicators and objectives to systematically identify gaps and track progress towards GESI integration in regional climate policies.
- ⇒ **ASEAN Member States and relevant development partners must involve the participation of marginalised groups in GESI integration in climate policy planning and implementation.** For example, Indigenous peoples, migrant communities, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, women and youths who are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change.

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