



A Background Guide for the

UNESCAP

Urban Sprawls and Poverty in the South Asian Region

**International Migration in the Asia Pacific Region
with Special Emphasis to Pacific Island Nations**

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Welcome to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission of the Asia and Pacific simulated at ShishukunjMUN 2017. We as the Executive Board of the committee, feel extremely delighted to welcome you all to the very first simulation of UNESCAP not only in ShishukunjMUN but in the Indore district as a whole.

The Executive Board has attended several MUNs and international conclaves in the past few years both at the local and international level and feel that these MUNs have helped students transforming into global citizens. From discussing labour laws in China to solving the refugee crisis in the European Union, from conferring about the issue of BREXIT to lamenting about the momentous women problems happening in Africa, these MUNs have been the best international platforms providing delegates a spectrum of global information.

The committee UNESCAP is one of the principal organisations that deal with complex socio-economic problems of the largest continent and largest oceanic islands of the world. With a vision to make Asia and Pacific a safe and resilient place founded on shared prosperity, social equity and sustainability, it unanimously works towards inclusive socio-economic development of the region.

The agendas chosen for the conference are Urban Poverty and Sprawls in South Asian Region and International Migration in Asian Pacific Region with Special Emphasis to Pacific Islands. The agendas provide an excellent platform and equal opportunity to all its member nations to come up with brilliant out of the box solutions.

Countries at the United Nations debate on agendas pertaining to poverty levels at the rural areas. They form allies, frame policies and recommend solutions in order to curb the rising rural poverty ratios at the international level. But till date, there has been no comprehensive debate on the issue of urban poverty that is state of poverty or poor thriving in the corners of cosmopolitan and well established cities. They tend to suffer more, more than the rural poor, by living in shaggy overcrowded and unsounded areas, illuminated with darkness and bleakness.

On the same note, we talk, read and discuss about migration. We come across the rising number of people migrating from Syria, due to its inhospitable unsafe war environment and reaching the European coasts. But have we ever pondered about the alarming migratory flows, originating from the most wealthy and resource rich islands of the world? The Pacific islands are facing a constant threat due to continuous climatic changes, mining activities and natural calamities.

Therefore, this year UNESCAP convenes to address, attend and resolve issues of those nations that have not been given much significance and light in the past few years. The agendas provide an excellent platform and equal opportunity to all its member nations to come up with brilliant out of the box solutions.

As the Executive Board of UNESCAP, we expect the delegates to be well researched and cognizant of the issues of urban poverty and migration in their respective nations. They should act as true diplomats and suggest immediate long term solutions in order to solve the problem in hand. Active participation and high level of originality in solutions is a must. It's high time that delegates rather than working on the cause-effect relationship of the agenda, work more towards finding solutions to these two international problems, which are getting goaded day by day, in a sustainable and appropriate manner. We hope that the background guides no way limit your research, but rather provide you a better slant and insight to the agendas. With our enriching and enchanting experience, we promise to make UNESCAP one of the most happening and gratifying committees.

Any queries, doubts and questions would be solved at the committee's official address which is unescap@shishukunjmun.com. Till then, cheers!

Regards

Om Agarwal- Chairperson

Bhakti Badlani- Committee Secretary

Aditya Rathi- Rapporteur

COMMITTEE BACKGROUND

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. Consisting of 53 Member States and 9 Associate Members, it has a geographical scope stretching across Turkey in the west till Kiribati in the east and from from the Russian Federation in the north to New Zealand in the south. Two thirds of the world's population resides in the region, becoming a home to 4.5 billion people which makes this committee the most extensive committee of the United Nations' five regional commissions. It was established in 1947 with its headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand with aims to work towards tackling the region's greatest challenges. The commission focuses on providing ethnic assistance and capacity building mainly in the following areas:

Established in 1947 with its headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, ESCAP works to overcome some of the region's greatest challenges by providing results oriented projects, technical assistance and capacity building to member States in the following areas:

- Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Financing for Development
- Trade, Investment and Innovation
- Transport
- Environment and Development
- Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction
- Social Development
- Statistics
- Subregional activities for development
- Energy

However the subsequent challenge lies in bringing the region's 680 million poor into the economic mainstream which will help enable everyone to achieve a better stander of living, one as envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations.

UNESCAP works towards the translation of these findings into policy dialogues and recommendations. With its convening power, it brings countries together to address issues through regional cooperation including the issues that:

- that most countries in the region face
- that benefit from the involvement of regional or many countries
- that are transboundary in nature
- that are of an emerging or sensitive nature i.e. those requiring further advice and negotiation.

The committee provides a forum for its member States to promote regional cooperation and collective action in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals which ultimately assists countries to achieve shared economic growth and social equity. Along with this it gives stronger participation to the smaller and the left out voices of the region i.e. the least developed countries, the small island developing States and the landlocked developing States.

ESCAP is committed to a resilient Asia and the Pacific founded on shared prosperity, social equity and sustainability. The committee's vision is to serve as the most comprehensive multilateral platform for the promotion of cooperation among the Member States to achieve sustainable economic and social development in the Asia and the Pacific.

Agenda 1: Urban Sprawls and Poverty in the South Asian Region

1.1 Topic Background

The world population clock as of this moment shows the world population to be 7.4 billion with more than 60% as of now living in cities or urbanized localities. This is giving rise to a pertinent issue of a sudden population bubble growth in major cities that has affected living standards which, in turn has given rise to several socio-economic issues that are a potential threat to nations and humanity as a whole. Urban sprawls refer to an area where the migrating population from rural areas to cities come and settle expanding the cities area and its suburbs over large area of undeveloped land it can also be defined as low density of commercial and economic growth on large area of undeveloped land. South Asian states have utterly faced and are facing the problem of urban sprawls. With 16.6 m of fossil fuel emission, China is one of the most polluted and highly populated economies in the world with 54% of its population living in urban centers. Dharavi in India is Asia's largest urban sprawl followed by Bangkok in Thailand. Lack of space and infrastructure inside the cities force people to move out and settle in the suburbs of the city. This leads to increased pollution rate and a no. health and environmental concerns. Therefore, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific must, with collaborative effort tackle this issue with efficiency in order to justify its 2030 Sustainable Developmental Goals.

1.2 Overview

The developing world is becoming more urban. Though it seems to be a force for poverty reduction, as economies shift gradually out of agriculture to more economically-productive activities, they can end up welcoming new poverty problems, such as urban slums in congested cities. Urbanization is considered to be the process of gradual shift of rural population to urban areas that boast of having excellent resources and better economic opportunities to the unemployed or people dwelling in rural households. However, it has its own demerits. Overpopulation in cities leads to over-utilization and contamination of resources that finally leads to their fearful end. This in return divides the society into two factions: people with enough resources and people with no resources. The latter group of people more towards the countryside in search of resources and in order love a better life which ultimately leads to the development of shanty towns.¹

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) defines an urban sprawl or a slum settlement as a household that cannot provide one of the following basic living characteristics:

- Durable housing of a permanent nature that protects against extreme climate conditions.
- Sufficient living space, which means not more than three people sharing the same room.
- Easy access to safe water in sufficient amounts at an affordable price.
- Access to adequate sanitation in the form of a private or public toilet

¹<http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/10574/Urban-RuralConnectionsLitReview.pdf>

shared by a reasonable number of people.

- Security of tenure that prevents forced evictions.²

The Asian Pacific region includes urban sprawls of various dimensions abided by vast and varied communities. Among them, the most principal slums are as follows:

Congested with the textile industries of Uttar Pradesh, fishermen from Goa, leather tanners, potters, embroidery decorators of Gujarat, and many more, Dharavi in India does not seem to cover more than three square kilometers of Mumbai. With one million people residing per square mile, it has earned the title of ‘Mini India’.³

Similarly, the Orangi town in Karachi is home to 1.5 million people that includes a wide array Pakhtuns, Sindhis, Balochs, Bengalis, and Punjabis. With a population that will increase by 63% in the next ten years, Orangi town tends to be the largest urban sprawl in Asia.⁴

On the same note, only a few metro stops from Bangkok’s luxurious malls and five-star hotels of the city center, the town of Klong Toey houses 5,500 slum communities and 100,000 people while only covering an area of around a square mile.⁵

1.3 Problem Areas

² https://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2003/07/GRHS_2003_Chapter_01_Revision_2010.pdf

³ <http://www.thehindu.com/2000/09/17/stories/13170632.htm>

⁴ <https://www.science.gov/topicpages/k/karachi+pakistan+slum>

⁵ http://rebels-library.org/files/planet_of_slums.pdf

2. Living Space

The right to adequate housing under the United Nations Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization has been identified as a key right, guaranteeing every citizen a safe, secured, and dignified place to live.⁶ Its scope is not restricted only to four walls and one roof but even ensures that every citizen gets basic amenities such as safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, and energy for cooking, heating, lighting, food storage, and refuse disposal.

Inadequate housing acts as a catalyst for mental health and general nutrition problems. Houses are not well-constructed with permanent roofs and durable materials and, citizens have to live in cramped housing structures with a multitude of health hazards such as mold, rats, and potential toxicity from lead paint, all of which can induce infections, diseases, and injuries. A proper, metalled, all-season road is often non-existent in their dwellings, and they have to live in close quarters with poor air quality and no sunlight. In Venezuela, the slums of the urban poor were destroyed during a mud-slide in 1999. Even after 8 months of the landslide, 33,000 people still lived in barracks and slums with appalling condition, unable to fetch basic amenities.⁷

Landslides, typhoons, natural disasters, and changes in weather patterns such as those seen in Haiti, Pacific Islands and even in Louisiana/Mississippi have

⁶ http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf

⁷ http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/43162/1/9241562927_eng.pdf

aggravated the hardships of the urban poor by making them homeless and helpless as to their relocation. When cyclone Nargis had hit Myanmar in 2008, it affected people so severely that they even didn't have resources like potable water and food, the condition was so worse that people drank water from the pits and mud lands and caught fish from creeks. According to International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 84,500 people were killed and 53,800 went missing during the tragedy.

The Pacific Island nations are already experiencing the effects of climate change. Tuvalu experienced a 7 centimeter rise in sea levels in the 13 years leading up to 2005, which displaced and destroyed homes for more than 10,000 people.⁸

3. Food Menace

Food and nutrition security are critical for economic development due to the role of nutrition in healthy growth and human capital development. Urban poor face high levels of chronic poverty and food vulnerability, which generally increases during crisis times. Food insecurity and exploitation can happen in different stages:

- First, where urban poor have no money in their pockets. In such conditions, they beg, steal and increase urban nuisance. Moreover, females and the elderly are more prone to food insecurity. Females including mothers and maidens have to barter with their bodies in order to get a square meal. Some impoverished mothers do not have enough food to produce adequate

breast milk or have breast milk substitutes, and as a result, cases of still-born children or children born with birth abnormalities or chronic malnutrition pop up. In Peru, children deal with malnutrition as their bodies not used to non-indigenous foodstuff that is offered to them by specialized agencies.

- Second, the urban poor may have some income generated from their daily incomes, but it is often not sufficient to fill all stomachs in a family. Buying street food sold on the roadside is considered cheaper than cooking, as when one cooks, they have to buy the raw food, utensils, and fuel, which ends up being more expensive.
- Third, though some urban poor may have enough food, the proportionality of food eaten by different members in a family is not equal. Men eat more, women eat less. Hence, life expectancy rates of females is generally lower than males.
- Fourth, during crises times like inflation times, situations worsens because of decreased access to foodstuffs and increased economic vulnerability. For example, droughts result in limited availability of foods in the market, hence high prices, while insecurity-related crises result in limited availability, accessibility, and affordability of food.

4. Water and Sanitation Crises

Safe drinking water and sanitation are indispensable to sustain life and health and fundamental to the dignity of all. As per a recent report by World Health Organization, 71.2% of urban households have no access to clean drinking water in their house, and one in five urban

⁸ <http://subversify.com/2012/03/09/the-environmental-impact-of-urban-poverty/>

households does not have its own toilet.⁹ Thus, the water-selling business is very common in slum areas. For the sake of profit, some exploit and create obstacles to other people's access to free or low-cost utility services.

One such prominent example is the case of water trading in Tongi Medical slum of Bangladesh, where the people have to pay a huge amount to ensure access to water. Two private entrepreneurs established two pumps. Since then they have been selling water in this slum. People are helpless because there is no municipal water connection and no other source of pure water. So they have no option but to purchase water at a high price. In the slum, one pitcher of water (approximately 10 liters) costs 1 taka. People pay 10 takas each time they take a bath and 20-30 takas for washing clothes. There are some who pay on a monthly basis as well. In that case, depending on the family size, water rent can vary from 300 to 700 takas per month. This puts a lot of economic pressure on the people where the monthly income of a person lies meagerly between 900-950 takas.¹⁰

Improper sanitation facilities and unavailability of potable water have led to many diseases such as tuberculosis. Tuberculosis has caused 1.6 million deaths up until now and is more dangerous in cities because of urban crowding and poor housing conditions. For example, in Karachi, Pakistan, the rate of tuberculosis in the poorest parts of the city is double the tuberculosis rate of the country on average. Additionally, tuberculosis is highly prevalent in Japan, but varies drastically between regions.

⁹ http://www.who.int/elena/titles/bbc/wsh_diarrhoea/en/

¹⁰ <http://thediplomat.com/2016/12/water-crisis-in-bangladeshs-urban-slums/>

Urban malaria, or malaria, is a primary cause of illness and death for people in many cities in the developing world, in part because the disease vectors have adapted to urban conditions. Sri Lanka faces a resurgence of urban malaria since 2000, where the mosquito vector *Anopheles culicifacies* breeds in polluted water bodies in the former war-affected areas in the east of the island.

In the cities of sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 200 million residents are at risk for malaria. The disease is prevalent in urban areas because infected mosquitoes breed in standing water left by the lack of drainage systems. Additionally, most urban populations are not immune to the disease, and overcrowding exacerbates its spread. Some of the most badly-affected by these constraints are the young people growing up in these urban slums. Approximately 443 million school days are lost as a result of water and sanitation related diseases. As a result of this and the already-low school enrollment rates, 68% of street children are illiterate.¹¹

5. Gender Inequality

Violence against women is endemic in all corners of the globe. It is a crisis which fundamentally reflects women's low status within societies. Women in impoverished areas often face mental, physical and psychological trauma. They also face some physical problems, such as dizziness, irregular periods, excessive bleeding, headache, aching arm, legs and stomach, loss of weight, low vision, obesity, back pain, weakness, and more. Many have to defecate in the open or share whatever

¹¹ https://thewaterproject.org/water-scarcity/water_stats



limited facilities are available, which tend to offer no privacy, safety, or hygiene. Unavailability of contraception promotes sexually-transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis, and warts. Women's jobs are not secured, and they do not earn much, so they are further vulnerable to rape, violence and prostitution at the workplace.¹²

7. Education

According to the findings of the National Sample Survey Association in Delhi, India, the net attendance ratio of children attending schools from the urban sprawls is only 54.5%, which is much lower than the attendance ratio in Delhi as a whole. One of the strongest reasons that explains this is that most slum dwellers do not have proper documents required during the admission such as birth certificates which notify the age of a child. They lack documentation because of their illiteracy, lack in education and awareness. This hampers them from filing all bureaucratic papers that is all documentation is not done. Barely being aware and knowing of any legal ways, they don't have documents. Therefore, most children

from urban slums turn out to be over-age when they complete primary schooling. The NSSO finding states that in standard I, 37.3% of students were 7 years old, 16.4% of students were 8 years old, and 11.9% of students were older than 8 years old. That means, at least 73.1% of slum students in standard I were over-aged. Most children, especially girls, are forced to drop out of school post-8th standard, in order to help their mothers in household chores or to work and earn for their family. Additionally, the quality of education offered to sprawl children is largely inadequate. Firstly, there is an acute absence of well-qualified teachers with proper will; secondly, even where there are teachers, there is no proper body or system to govern the teachers; and thirdly, absence of proper infrastructure, books, washrooms, and other basic resources hinder the learning transactions between the pupils and the teachers. Therefore, despite living in urban areas surrounded with western ideas, elementary rights like education are still denied to children affected by urban sprawl.

1.4 Urban Poverty Trends in South Asia

Social poverty, or urban poverty, is especially high in South Asia because of the presence of various developing and underdeveloped nations that are still struggling to progress in fields like education, health, and social security systems. With one-fifth of South Asia living below the \$1.25/day poverty line, Proportions of poor, rural and urban

people (%).

Source: IMF and World Bank reports (2012)

¹² <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>

South Asia accounts for 80% of the Asia's urban poor and its share of urban poor has risen phenomenally over the 1990–2008 period.¹³ In South Asia, urban poverty ratios have increased at an annual rate of 1.4%, with a GDP growth rate of 4.5% and an urban population growth of 2.8%. According to the United Nations Development of Economic and Social Affairs, one-fifth of South Asia is below the \$1.25/day poverty line. As per the UN-HABITAT report of 2012, the number of informal settlements has increased by 200.5 million which is far more than eastern and western Asia. The Pacific islands constitute 28.6% of its urban population living in informal settlements.¹⁴

The other notable reasons that account for the high urban poverty rates in the South Asian region include:

- The alarming youth unemployment rate which is around 9.6%. The youth in South Asia are far more vulnerable to unemployment because they lack the right skills, work experience, and

- South Asia is more prone to changes in climatic conditions such as cyclones, hurricanes, and floods due to their proximity to water bodies. Therefore, the turbulence created by these calamities leave a long-term impact on the urban slums.

Apart from South Asia region, the Pacific islands are also the fatalities of urban poverty. According to OXFAM, approximately 2.7 million people that is one-third of the Pacific population, do not have the income or subsistence production to meet their basic human needs. Four million Pacific people live in poverty – almost half the total population. Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Kiribati are among the poorest countries in the world and fifteen per cent of the population of Fiji – 120,000 people – live in squatter settlements in urban areas. Therefore, the situation is nowhere better in the Asian Pacific region.

Despite certain stoppages in the area of poverty eradication, various countries in

Region	1990		1996		2002		2008	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
East Asia and the Pacific	67.5	24.4	45.9	13.0	39.2	6.9	20.4	4.3
South Asia	50.5	40.1	46.1	35.2	45.1	35.2	38.0	20.7
Developing Asia	60.1	30.0	44.6	21.2	42.0	17.0	29.0	13.7
Developing World	52.5	20.5	43.0	17.0	39.5	15.1	29.4	11.6

job search experience.

¹³ https://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Habitat-III-Issue-Paper-22_Informal-Settlements.pdf

¹⁴

<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/59778/urban-poverty-asia.pdf>

the South Asian belt have worked well in eliminating urban sprawls by devising innovative programs and schemes.

Bangladesh has an Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction (UPPR) plan, which aims at improving the livelihoods and living conditions of 3 million poor and

extremely poor people, especially women and children, living in 30 urban areas throughout Bangladesh. Implemented under two levels, it has worked well in improving the security of land tenure and ensuring access to essential services such as health facilities and finance for improved housing and entrepreneurship.

Similarly, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has a nationwide Urban Poverty Alleviation Program (UPAP) in line with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which extends microcredit services to finance income-generating activities of the poor. The UPAP has established loan centers in settlements of typically 4,000–6,000 households. The program serves the urban poor, though it places a special emphasis on its services to women. With a burgeoning urban population, the government has introduced a holistic pro-poor development package that focuses on interventions in education, labor, and housing markets across Pakistan.

1.5 Important Organisations, Treaties, Resolutions

Apart from researching on individual bloc positions, we strongly recommend the delegates to view the following resolutions and reports passed by international bodies that will give you an insight of the past international action taken in regard to urban slums and informal settlements.

1. *E/ESCAP/CMP(2)/2*
2. *E/ESCAP/CMP(2)/1*
3. *E/ESCAP/CMP(2)/3*

4. *E/ESCAP/CMP(2)/4*
5. *E/ESCAP/CMP(2)/5*
6. *E/ESCAP/CMP(2)/6*
7. *www.un-documents.net/a51r178.htm*
8. *www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/2011/res%202011.21.pdf*

1.6 Questions a Resolutions Must Answer

1. How can the South Asian nations devise appropriate slum management policy that can help in curbing further city contamination?
2. How can the government provide immediate rehabilitation facilities to all the urban slums that have been affected by any natural calamity?
3. What kind of laws can be legislated by the governments in order to promote safer living and working conditions for the urban poor?
4. How can the economically weak nations be assisted monetarily so that they could fight against urban poverty?
5. How can the governments promote self-employment opportunities in order to uplift the urban slum class especially the women?
6. How can the scope and benefits of programs such as UPAP (Urban Poverty Alleviation Program) and UPPR (Urban Partnership for Poverty reduction) be promoted internationally?
7. What kind of programs should be stimulated in order to promote primary and elementary education amongst the slum children?

1.7 Bibliography

- <http://www.unescap.org/>
- <http://thediplomat.com/2016/12/water-crisis-in-bangladeshs-urban-slums/>
- <http://thepoliticalbouillon.com/en/dharavi-life-in-the-slums/>
- http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/drought/docs/Nutrition%20Workds%20Urban%20malnutrition%20201307.pdf
- <http://www.unescap.org/our-work/social-development>
- http://globalinitiative-escr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/women_slums_and_urbanisation_may_2008.pdf
- <http://unnayan.org/reports/Migration.and.living.conditions.in.urban.slums.pdf>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Visakhapatnam/migrants-do-not-carry-poverty-to-urban-areas/article8221860.ece>
- <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/the-measure-of-poverty/>
- <http://in.reuters.com/article/italy-poverty-idINDEE96G0HP20130717>
- <https://www.thoughtco.com/massive-urban-slums-1435765>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/news/the-hindu-exclusive-on-the-changing-face-of-the-indian-slum/article14412470.ece>
- <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/59778/urban-poverty-asia.pdf>

Agenda 2: International Migration in the Asia Pacific Region with Special Emphasis to Pacific Island Nations

2.1 Topic Background

In 2015, there were over 60 million migrants in countries of the ESCAP region, and over 98 million migrants from ESCAP countries living outside their countries of birth, 40 per cent of all migrants in the world. These figures include labour migrants, refugees, and students engaging in temporary or permanent migration, both within the region and beyond. People migrate from their home countries because of various reasons which contain educational, social, religious and economic reasons from which educational and economic reasons are the most prevalent. Pacific islands face a bigger threat. which include Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Hawaii and 12 more. 34,748 Indians living in United States in 1995 to rapid increase to 5,72,044 Indians in 2005 which is around 41.7% of the whole of europe's population. Much migration in this region is irregular, resulting in migrants being vulnerable to abuse of their rights and exploitation. This not only harms migrants themselves, but all members of society. Recognizing these challenges, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for member States to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”. To meet this target, it is essential that UNESCAP member states work to ensure that the

laws, regulations and procedures governing migration respect the rights of migrants and meet labour market needs efficiently, while building their capacity to implement these reforms.

2.2 Key Terms

- **Immigration**-Immigration is the movement of people internationally to a nation where they do not originally have citizenship; that is, the act of entering a foreign nation in order to live there.
- **Emigration**- Emigration is the process of leaving a country in order to live elsewhere, either in a nation of the same continent or of another continent. Both involve crossing an international border.
- **Host Country** - the country to where migration takes place or where the immigrants come to
- **Home Country**-the country from which the migration takes place.
- **Legal Migration**- When a country or an organization, legally with the approval of both, its home and host country start to reside in a foreign land.
- **Illegal Migration**- When a person illegally enter a country's border and start residing over there. Also known as Undocumented Migration.

2.3 International Migration

Migration is the movement by people from one place to another with the intentions of settling, permanently in the new location. Where poets, singers, and artisans during the medieval period, migrated from place to place in the search of money and better living

standards, the present century witnesses people migrating from one nation to another with the same perseverance in mind, which in turn has broadened its spectrum and has given it the title of international migration.

At the United Nations' Second Asian Population Conference, held in Tokyo in 1972, international migration was not even mentioned in the review of demographic trends in the region, but today, by becoming home to 57.7 percent of the current world population, Asia's most pertinent and unparalleled interest issue turns out to be international migration. International migration has a significant influence on the economic, social, and demographic development of all Asian nations. International migration is now an established structural feature of the region although some nations still dismiss it as a temporary, passing phenomenon. Many Asian nations are developing international migration policies, but much of this has not been informed by high-quality research relating to the causes and effects of migration.¹⁵

All countries in the Asia Pacific region are now influenced to some degree by international migration, although the nature and level of that impact varies greatly. International migration is a topic of consummate attentiveness in the region among both governments and populations; with newspapers and other media reporting on it daily, the issue is constantly in the public consciousness. Going lower on the political map of Asia, the Oceania region, which includes Pacific Islands and major international water bodies, hosts more than 6 million international migrants as described by International Organization of Migration.

¹⁵https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/gcim/rs/RS2.pdf

The positive migration balance is largely towards Australia and New Zealand, which remain attractive destination economies. The bulk of the 1.5 million emigrants from the region originate from the Pacific Islands (37 percent), and it is mostly intraregional. Overall the problem is aggravated day by day.¹⁶

2.4 Causes of Migration

As described by International Labor Organization, the reasons for migration in the Asian-Pacific region are complex and diverse, keeping in mind that Asia is the home of developing nations.

- **Economic Aspects:** The economic disparity amongst various Asian nations is a major factor that has dictated the flow of migrants in the Asia Pacific region. High levels of unemployment and poverty in countries of origin act as a push factor in the decision to emigrate. Hence, in order to earn a better a livelihood, the process of emigration is common in this region. For example, immigration flows are higher in Japan, Taiwan, and Singapore than Malaysia owing to the fact that the former countries provide substantially higher wages.¹⁷
- **Military Aspects:** In countries like Turkey in West Asia, residents are bound to abscond just because their home country is militarily unstable. They may be forced out because of armed conflict, persecution at home, or environmental degradation. The large influxes of migrants from

Myanmar to Thailand and from Afghanistan to Pakistan are examples of dislocations caused by armed conflict and suppression of ethnic groups. War years further worsen the condition of migrants. For example, the Vietnam War during the 1940s saw huge displacement of workers to economically and militarily safe nations like United States of America, Australia and Canada.

- **Political Aspects:** A politically unstable nation, with loose governance, acts as a strong reason for people to migrate. For example, in the past, following the Indian independence in 1947 and the India-Pakistan division, about 5 million Hindus and Sikhs left Pakistan for India, and about 6 million Muslims moved to Pakistan from India. Weak governance in Syria exemplifies migrant crisis in Western Countries. 9 million people have been displaced by the ongoing crisis in Syria. Migrant boats are flooding with about 11,000 refugees everyday. The number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean has soared as people flee in the Middle East and the Sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁸
- **Recreational Aspects:** Some citizens are interested in visiting other lands for the sake of adventure or for exploration, and the emerging demand for labor may provide the required opportunity.

The higher population numbers place strains on a country's infrastructure and services available within the country.

¹⁶ <https://www.iom.int/asia-and-pacific>

¹⁷ https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/gcim/rs/RS2.pdf

¹⁸ <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/3/14/syriaa-s-forciblydisplacedtop9million.html>

¹⁹The host country usually faces a major challenge in assimilating immigrants and emigrants into their society and to provide necessary support. It is also believed that high immigration numbers might act as a threat to the national identity. Increment in dependence on welfare along with a threat to national security through terrorism or illegal immigration is also a belief. The Brookings Institute's researches prove that only 2.3% depression (1980-2007) is seen in the wages of the host country, caused due to immigration. Although immigration poses such disastrous problems to the host country, it helps in the development of human societies and making the host nation culturally diverse. The migration of skilled and educated talented individuals to other nations is commonly referred to as the brain drain or the human capital flight.²⁰ This may be an advantage to the host nation, as it increases the human development index of the host country. For example, in India, brain drain is more because educated individuals are immigrating to nations such as the USA for higher wages and better opportunities.

2.5 Trends in International Migration

1. Illegal Migration

Every nation has certain rules, regulations, and policies that govern the flow of people from one nation to another. Migration is termed illegal when

¹⁹ <https://www.boundless.com/economics/textbooks/boundless-economics-textbook/immigration-economics-38/introduction-to-immigration-economics-138/impact-of-immigration-on-the-host-and-home-country-economics-546-12643/>

²⁰ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1275994/>

people do not have permission and required documents to cross the international borders of their home nation. Undocumented migrants are those without a residence permit authorizing them to regularly stay in their country of destination. They might have been unsuccessful in the asylum procedure, have overstayed visa or have entered irregularly.²¹

The Asia Pacific region has been facing the problem of illegal migration, where every one in four workers in Asia has an illegal status according to the International Labor Organization.²² The growth of illegal migration in Asia is linked to governments' unwillingness and unsound behavior in effectively managing migration and employers' desire for easily available and exploitable workers, especially in times of economic downturns.

Labor flows from Indonesia to Malaysia have been largely illegal, as have the movements of Thai workers to Malaysia and other countries. Thailand itself hosts up to 1.7 million illegal workers, mainly from Burma, China, Laos, and Cambodia, according to the International Organization for Migration. Bangkok, Thailand police estimates that at any one time, 50,000 such illegals are in the capital city.²³

Another incredible feature of undocumented migration is the involvement of unknown middlemen who control the migration process in the host country. Under these middlemen's auspice and misleading promises migrants end up becoming bonded laborers, subjected to heinous trafficking, kidnapping, and sexual violence. They come under the trap of these middlemen

²¹ <http://picum.org/en/our-work/who-are-undocumented-migrants/>

²² <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/migration-asia-pacific-region>

²³ <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/migration-asia-pacific-region>

and often end up in problems with their rights exploited. For example, in Indonesia, it was found that the migrant workers working in countries like Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore were affected the most and these abuses found their way to a high level in these countries. 90 per cent of the 240,000 foreign domestic workers in Malaysia in 2004 came out to be Indonesian citizens. The Human Rights Watch documented that such migrants worked 16 to 18 hours a day, all days of the week and received payment less than US\$0.25 by the hour. Work contracts are violated and never followed which ultimately affects the workers as they aren't paid accordingly. Often women and children are also sold into bonded situations, often by relatives, while at the extreme, people are kidnapped and trafficked across borders against their will. In all cases, their unauthorized status exposes them to the possibility of exploitation and prevents them seeking the protection of authorities at the destination.

Thailand receives women and children from Burma, China and Laos and distributes them with Thai women and children to Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, and outside the region. This movement is increasingly dominated by syndicates and criminal gangs.²⁴

2. Feminization of Migration

Another appalling drift that has triggered migratory flow overseas is the movement of plethora of women, especially from the South Asian region to the North. Women migrants represent the most vulnerable migrant group in any nation. Where Gulf countries permit women to settle permanently or bring over families, East Asian nations hardly allow women to migrate with their families. Therefore, they have to migrate alone. According to

²⁴ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001584/158473e.pdf>

the International Organization of Migration, women migrate because of the following reasons:²⁵

- **Jobs:** Most of them migrate for low-wage occupations, such as domestic work. Hong Kong (China) and Singapore represent the major destinations of domestic workers in Asia. There are certain 'women-centric jobs' for which employers especially hire women, such as entertainers in the form of prostitutes, bar dancers, cabaret dancers and servants in hotels and restaurants, tailors, and sweepers. The number of women moving to Japan as entertainers has substantially increased in the past few years.²⁶
- **Marriage:** Asia has accounted for the most number of international marriages in the past few decade. This is one of the few forms of permanent immigration permitted in Asia. Since the 1990s, foreign brides have been sought by farmers in rural areas of Japan and Taiwan. In the last decade, marriage migration to Korea has increased, accounting for almost 14 percent of all marriages in Korea in 2005. Indian men recruit brides from Bangladesh, and Chinese farmers, due to severe gender imbalances resulting from the one-child policy, seek wives from Vietnam, Laos, and Burma.²⁷

The isolation of women workers means that they are exposed to serious violations of human rights. The

²⁵ http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/EGM/Ittmig_Asia/P06_Siddiqui.pdf

²⁶ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_160632.pdf

²⁷ <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13621025.2014.886439?mobileUi=0&journalCode=ccst20>

conditions of domestic workers often can be comparable to slavery: unduly long working hours, poor remuneration, no access to social security, inadequate food, and isolation because they are afraid of the authorities and often do not speak the local language. According to the Asian Migrant Centre 1999, Singapore and Hong Kong have been declared the safest working places in Asia.²⁸

2.6 Problem Areas

1. Adequate Housing

We see a clear correlation of the fundamental rights of a person inclusive of the health aspect. This can be put parallel to the right of people in any state to adequate housing. Many problems like poor nutrition, mental health, and substance abuse are triggered because of the lack of adequate housing amongst migrants. Despite the importance of this right, there still remains a disturbingly large gap between international human rights standards and the situation prevailing in many parts of the world. Pursuant to the provision of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, all states have obligations to take progressive measures to the extent of available resources, individually and through international assistance, to respect, protect, and promote the right of everyone to adequate housing, regardless of their citizenship. This right is not a right to mere shelter but the right to live in a safe peaceful and dignified environment.

Article 43 of the International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and

Members of Their Families guarantees equal treatment in access to housing, including social housing schemes and protection against exploitation in respect of rents to regular migrants and their families. Whenever the displacement is protracted, all refugee camps are dilapidated and overcrowded, hence providing inadequate shelter and services. This comes out as a major hindrance in regulation of inhibition of the migrants and refugees. Sometimes their inhabitants enjoy no basic services at all. Displaced women and girls living in camps can be subject to sexual and gender-based violence.

In urban areas, urban refugees, asylum-seekers, and Internally Displaced Peoples can fare little better. Often unable in practice or because of their legal status to rent adequate accommodation, many are forced to live in overcrowded and insecure conditions. Irregular migrants with inability to pay rents result in eviction, and they are often found homeless. Their lack of legal status and the criminalization of irregular migration in many countries means that most will be unable or unwilling to challenge discriminatory or otherwise abusive rental practices and seek legal remedies. The national housing facilities do not include irregular migrants, which creates another problem for all such people. (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) All migrants, IDPs, and refugees need protection against forced return in all circumstances and in order of insurance of the same could also be provided with the right to acquire adequate shelter along with resettlement in conditions that respect, inter alia, this right.²⁹

²⁸ <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/saudi0704/7.htm>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3651545/>

²⁹ http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf

2. Employment Opportunities for the Migrants

Despite tight migration policies and strict border controls, the Asia Pacific region has experienced a major wave of migrants coming and settling in. Countries in Southeast Asia have always been prominent in the employment of both skilled and unskilled labor, as small-scale employment opportunities are high. Increment is seen in Australia in its migration quotas, mainly in the skilled migration intake. All the manifestations of scale and diversity in this region include the emergence of new regional patterns of skilled migrants in specific occupations along with the rapid growth in demand for knowledge.

Key factors accounting for these developments include disparities in economic growth, income and poverty levels between countries, labor shortages arising from demographic transformations, structural change in labor supply, and the role of social networks and the migration industry as drivers of migration. The Asia Pacific region gives various opportunities to migrants, as the region is highly populated and there is always some work available; despite this, or perhaps because of it, there exists explosion of migrant workers.³⁰

Employers often oblige migrant domestic workers into living at their place of work. Most migrants end up living in overcrowded dormitories without any access to sanitation and in a very perilous condition. There are no practical rights given to the workers. Besides exploitation of their basic fundamental rights, they are socially, emotionally, and sometimes even physically abused.

Many, in order to earn a living, are trapped and cannot escape. Domestic workers are made to sleep in poorly ventilated rooms, storerooms or common living areas with no regard for their dignity, privacy, or personal security. Employers take advantage of the condition of the migrants, and their vulnerability results in their exploitation.³¹

3. Health and Disease

On the agenda of policymakers in the Asia Pacific region and the Pacific Islands, migrant health issues have risen past statistical levels. This ultimately has generated momentum at the very highest levels of government. What lies in front is to change this swinging momentum into visible changes on the ground. Despite the government policies of nations on both programmatic and policy fronts, Asian migrants workers continue to remain devoid of access to health facilities and services at all stages of migrants.

Labor migrants are often seen as the carriers of diseases or a burden to the health systems of the countries that receive them. However, what breaks the perception is that migrants are generally young and healthier in comparison to the native population. They often tend to underutilize health services. Usually, there is an increment seen in migrants' vulnerability to ill health due to various risk factors, which include lack of adequate health insurance, poverty, and uncertain status. Whether or not the new location they tend to move has necessary immunizations and health care services is

³⁰ <https://vital-uat.une.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/une:5516?sort=sort>

³¹ http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf

also something which is not fully assured.³²

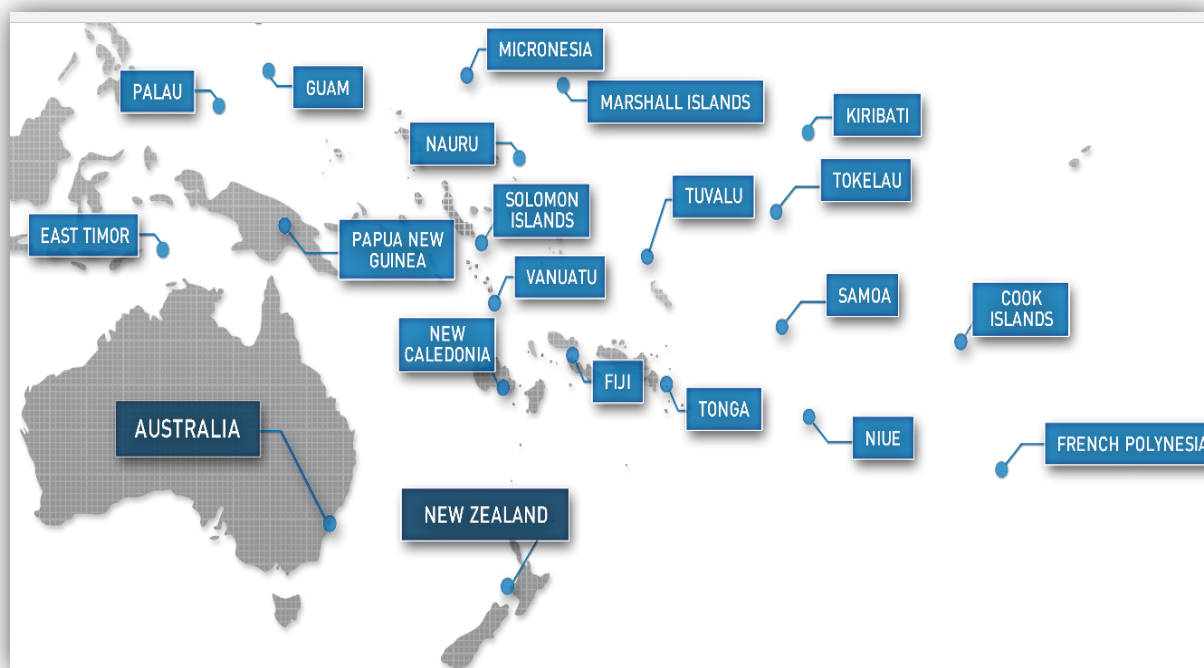
Migrants play a crucial role in the development of the economies and the societies of many countries within the Asia Pacific region and elsewhere. With such an important role they play and given such contributions, the health and the well-being of the migrants cannot be ignored. Most migrants' human rights are seen exploited to a very large extent, which becomes a causal factor in the health issues faced by the migrants. Communicable diseases like that of tuberculosis and flu are most common amongst the migrants. Sexually transmitted diseases also find their way through such serious health issues faced by the migrants. These diseases are different than those faced by the urban population. Migration is also a key source of stress and stress-related diseases, mainly depression and anxiety due to worker's isolation and lack of

family support. For this, health personnel and doctors need to be better prepared to respond to people's needs. Many rural doctors have less experience and education than their urban counterparts.³³

Upgrades in the education of rural health care workers are highly necessary. Economic incentives for these workers will help them to qualify their work and strive for better. Despite the efforts of all nations and international bodies to improve the health conditions of rising migrant populations, many are still left without their needs being met. Because of this, UNESCAP must look for possible solutions to tackle this challenge in order to reduce disparities and improve the quality of health care.

2.7 Migration in the Pacific Islands: A Closer Look

The Pacific belt comprises a total of 40



³² http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0/19/161560/e96458.pdf

³³ <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/migration-and-health/migrant-health-in-the-european-region/migration-and-health-key-issues>

islands that are broadly and ethnogeographically divided into three groups: Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. Rich in coral deposits, phosphate, and limestone rocks, the Pacific Islands contribute a significant percentage to the world economy. With two-thirds of total land under forest cover, they generally lack mineral resources.

Migration in the Pacific Rim dates back centuries, but it has amplified in recent years due to countless natural and human factors.

Causes

Natural resources are unevenly distributed across the globe. Within the Pacific division, the countries of Melanesia are gifted with splendid land, marine, and other natural resources. Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia in the Melanesia belt have brilliant copper and gold deposits as well as 25% of the world's nickel deposits respectively, of immense world significance.

In contrast, the Micronesian and Polynesian belts have been less fortunate. Apart from being geographically and demographically smaller, they support minimal vegetation and do not share as bright of an economic future. Therefore, emigration rates are higher from Micronesia and Polynesia.

Changes in climate conditions such as increase in average air and ocean temperatures, melting of snow and icecaps, and rising of average sea levels, are also important factors deciding the direction of migration in the Pacific belt. Climate models suggest that global mean sea level will rise by 18-59 cm by 2099, which will first inundate the islands of Tuvalu and Tokelau. A one meter rise in sea level will submerge 80% of the Majuro atoll in the Marshall Islands and

12.5% of the landmass in Kiribati. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that by 2050, most of the South Tawaran region will get drowned by a periodic storm.³⁴ Therefore, in order to avoid calamitous future repercussions for the present and future generations, most people vacate the islands and move to landlocked nations.

Depletion

Pacific states have been and are facing continuous environmental challenges, including limited land and marine resources. Depletion of natural resources and degradation of their quality are the outcomes of over-increasing population pressures. Take the case of Nauru: Nauru is a tall example of exploitation of natural resources. As one of the richest phosphate islands in the Pacific, it attracted the attention of developed states because phosphate is an esteemed ingredient in commercial fertilizers. By 2000, the primary deposits were substantially exhausted, and mining ceased. The problems in Nauru extended well beyond the depletion of phosphate rock. The mining left a majority of the land wholly unusable for any other purpose, resulting in 'near complete environmental devastation'.³⁵ Exhaustion of its most significant natural resource, coupled with gross mismanagement of the income derived from that resource, has left Nauru with an uncertain economic future.

³⁴<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3758961/>

³⁵<https://www.boundless.com/economics/textbooks/boundless-economics-textbook/immigration-economics-38/introduction-to-immigration-economics-138/impact-of-immigration-on-the-host-and-home-country-economies-546-12643/>

Shelter nations

According to the Pacific Institute of Public Policy, the United States of America, New Zealand, France, and Australia have proven to be the safest and most chosen host nations by migrants due to their flexible migration and colonization rules.

New Zealand has fostered special relationships with Polynesia. Tokelauans, Cook Islanders, and Niueans were granted New Zealand citizenship under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act of 1990, in which all migrants were given the right to enter and move freely within New Zealand, as well as to access the labor market, education, and other governmental services. The New Zealand government under the Recognized Seasonal Employer scheme permits 8,000 overseas workers to be given limited purpose visas each year to work in the country's horticulture and viticulture for a period of nine months.

The United States has also simplified migration between its allied Pacific Islands and the mainland. Residents of the two unincorporated US territories (Guam and American Samoa) are United States citizens whose freedom of movement within the United States is constitutionally protected. Likewise, residents of the Northern Mariana Islands are United States citizens under the Covenant of political union.

France too adopted a receptive attitude towards the citizenship of indigenous people of the Pacific. Under the 1946 Constitution of the French Republic, all inhabitants of French overseas territories were granted French citizenship, with the concomitant right to move freely among the territories as well as between the territories and metropolitan France.

2.8 Important Organisations

- Human Right's Watch
- International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Right
- International Labor Organization
- International Organization of Migration
- Pacific Institute of Public Policy

2.9 Questions a Resolution Must Answer

1. How can the Asian nations devise stricter emigration and immigration policies in order to curb illegal migration amongst states, territories and borders?
2. How can resource rich countries help the Pacific Islands, devoid of natural resources, with basic important amenities?
3. How can the migrants be guaranteed immediate medical, vaccination and immunization facilities in times of need?
4. How can the government assist the migrants legally that could help in limiting their forced migration and stimulate their permanent settlement?
5. How can unfair means at the workplace generally under taken by the employer be restricted so that the migrants could work conveniently?
6. Does political stability of any nation determine migration flows from its home country? How can it be settled?

7. How can safety be ensured to all those migrants who reside in war strewn nation?

2.10 Links for Further Research

Apart from the information included in the study guide, we would even recommend the delegates to go through the following links that will broaden their knowledge on the agenda. The background guide provided is not an exhaustive source of information.

1. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Disaster%20Response%20in%20Asia%20Pacific_A%20Guide%20to%20Intl%20Tools%20Services.pdf
2. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001584/158473e.pdf>
3. <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/SDD%20AP%20Migration%20Report%20report%20v6-1-E.pdf>
4. <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Climate-Change-and-Migration-Issues-in-the-Pacific.pdf>
5. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/store/10.1002/app5.166/asset/app5166.pdf?v=1&t=j2rxfpq5&s=f30b04c74a4ce1ecc34a1b681c53724b6611f166>
6. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/app5.32/full>
7. <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan010365.pdf>
8. <http://www.transre.org/en/blog/pacific-islanders-prepare-regional->

[migration-responses-face-climate-change/](http://www.transre.org/en/blog/pacific-islanders-prepare-regional-migration-responses-face-climate-change/)

9. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001584/158473e.pdf>
10. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/126245/api098.pdf>
11. <http://www.hrpub.org/download/20150620/EER4-14090336.pdf>
12. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-regional-escap.pdf>
13. <http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/pacific/drive/Ageingpopulation20.10.10.pdf>
14. <http://srilanka.iom.int/iom/sites/default/files/Regional-Strategy-for-Asia-and-the-Pacific%20%283%29.pdf>

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4. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Pacific-Islands>
5. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOCIALPROTECTION/Resources/SP-Discussion-papers/Labor-Market-DP/0912.pdf>
6. www.ilo.org/asia/areas/labour-migration/

7. www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/
8. www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/EGM_Ittmig_Asia/
9. www.migrationpolicy.org › Regions
10. thediplomat.com/2015/09/urbanization-and-migration-in-developing-asia
11. www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/
12. <https://migration.ucdavis.edu/rs/more.php?id=58>
13. www.welfareasia.org/4thconference/papers/Yamaguchi_Affordable
14. [Refugees: Risks and Challenges Worldwide | migrationpolicy.org](http://www.migrationpolicy.org)
15. www.southasiaanalysis.org/paper632
16. <http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/pacific/drive/Ageingpopulation20.10.10.pdf>
17. thediplomat.com/.../india-resolving-the-bangladesh-immigration-issue
18. <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/...>
19. <http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/pacific/drive/Ageingpopulation20.10.10.pdf>