



## THE GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: PERSPECTIVES FROM ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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### Executive Summary

Several governments in the Asia-Pacific region<sup>1</sup> have actively engaged in the United Nations' Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) for the past seven years, as both participants and leaders. Virtually every country in the region has assigned representatives in GFMD's network of country focal points, eight Asia-Pacific countries are part of GFMD Steering Group, and a number have contributed to the roundtable and thematic meetings either as co-chairs or team members. Three countries from the region were also part of a 14-member Assessment Team that outlined the future of the Forum after 2012.

The region's active engagement has helped shape the themes and topics of GFMD meetings, beginning with the first meeting convened in 2007. However, during this time, the challenges facing migrants and their families have not abated. To remain relevant, the GFMD must become as instrumental in shaping the reality on the ground as it has been in shaping the global discourse on migration and development. The 2012 GFMD assessment shows participant states' demand for a more development-focused and results-driven forum.

The GFMD could provide more opportunities for collaboration between governments and other migration stakeholders. While becoming more action-oriented, it should continue to shape the agenda on migration and development and set international priorities among the wide range of issues that demands attention. Toward these ends, the GFMD would benefit from (1) an enhanced linkage with regional fora and processes; (2) a more dynamic people-to-people networking platform where policymakers can find partners, pilot projects, test ideas, and develop policy and programmatic tools; and (3) a more focused, action-oriented, and results-driven process for the next five years.



This brief argues that although the Global Forum on Migration and Development was primarily designed as a venue for changing the discourse on migration, the success of its efforts to date and the pressing need for progress on the ground both indicate that it is time to assess how the Forum can facilitate concrete action.

## I. Introduction

The migration and development discourse has evolved since the Government of Belgium convened the first Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in 2007. Today, governments widely agree that in the right circumstances, managing the repercussions of migration can complement poverty reduction and economic development efforts in countries of origin. The pivotal question among many policymakers now is not *whether* migration can benefit migrants and their countries of origin, but *how* it does so, and what policies and programmes can better facilitate the linkage.

Six GFMD meetings were convened in Asia, Europe, North America and Africa over the last seven years, the hosts alternating between developed and developing countries. After the first meeting in Belgium, the Philippines hosted the second forum —followed by Greece (2009), Mexico (2010), Switzerland (2011), and Mauritius (2012). In 2013, the United Nations High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development pre-empted a convening of the Forum. Sweden and Turkey will host GFMD in 2014 and 2015.

The success of these six meetings is little contested. A 2012 assessment commissioned to inform the future of the Forum reveals that 80 percent of participant states have “great” or “general satisfaction” with the GFMD process. About 150 governments participated in the meeting in Mauritius, a testament to the

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sustained support and need for an international dialogue on migration and development issues. (Global Forum on Migration and Development, 2011).

As Sweden hosts the 7th GFMD in May 2014, participants’ expectations for the new convening are high. This year’s Forum is taking place in the lead up to the post-2015 development agenda discourse, and there are growing calls in the Asia-Pacific region for integrating migration into this agenda.

This brief examines the extent of the Asia-Pacific region’s engagement with the GFMD process through the years and identifies the challenges and opportunities ahead in keeping this engagement alive.

## II. Asia-Pacific Government Engagement with the Global Forum on Migration and Development

Governments in the Asia-Pacific region have been actively engaged as participants in the GFMD process and as leaders driving its direction and continuity. Beyond attendance records at the meetings themselves, other indicators that can gauge the region’s level of engagement are:

- **Country focal points.** Virtually every country in the region now has assigned representatives to GFMD’s network of country focal points. The focal points directly liaise with the host government and GFMD Support Unit and coordinate GFMD-related preparations at the national level.
- **Troika.** The current, previous, and future hosts of the meeting—known as the Troika—govern the Forum. The Philippines, as the host of the second GFMD, and the first developing country and only country from Asia to host, was part of the Troika in the critical first three years of the Forum. The Troika has been responsible for the preparation and actual implementation of the event.
- **Steering Group.** Seven countries from the region— Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, and Thailand— have been part of the GFMD Steering Group since its inception in 2007, with India joining

the group in 2009. Starting with only about 20 governments, the Steering Group included 37 governments by 2013, each lending strategic and political support to the host government.

- **Roundtable preparation.** Governments in the region have also contributed to the roundtable and thematic meetings either as co-chairs or as team members in charge of preparing roundtable concept notes, and identifying and inviting speakers. Table 1 shows that a few countries are especially active in the roundtables. Bangladesh has co-chaired at least one roundtable in every GFMD meeting; Australia, Indonesia, Philippines,

and Thailand each co-chaired two roundtables over the last seven years; and Sri Lanka has co-chaired one roundtable.

- **Assessment team.** Three countries from the region—Bangladesh, India, and the Philippines—were also part of a 14-member Assessment Team<sup>2</sup> that Switzerland chaired in 2011 to examine the GFMD process. The review looked at GFMD structures as well as the impact and relevance of its outcomes in substantive policy discussion, lessons learned, and policy changes. The findings of the assessment proved critical in outlining the future of the Forum.

Table 1: Global Forum on Migration and Development Roundtable Co-chairs and Team Members from the Asia-Pacific Region, 2007-2014

Year	Co-chair(s)	Team Members
2007	Bangladesh	Philippines*, India, Indonesia
2008	Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Thailand	Bangladesh, China*, India*, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand*
2009	Australia, Bangladesh, Thailand	Thailand, Philippines*, Indonesia, India, China, Bangladesh, Australia
2010	Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia	Australia*, Bangladesh**, Japan, Philippines*, Thailand
2011	Australia, Bangladesh, Philippines	Bangladesh**, Indonesia, Philippines***
2014	Bangladesh	Australia, Bangladesh**, Philippines**

Notes: The 2012 Global Forum on Migration and Development convened regional meetings rather than roundtables. The asterisks indicate: \*Team member in two roundtables; \*\*Team member in 3 roundtables; \*\*\* Team member in 4 roundtables.

### III. Incorporating Regional Issues in the Global Discourse

The Asia-Pacific region’s active engagement in the Forum has shaped its themes and topics over the last seven years. In 2012, a thematic review of GFMD roundtables, outcomes, and recommendations highlighted the prominence of issues relevant to the region.

For instance, given the prevalence of temporary labour migration within and from Asia-Pacific, it is not surprising that labour migration and the rights of migrants were two of the key prominent themes discussed in the Forum, with eight and six dedicated roundtables respectively (see Table 2).

When the Philippines hosted in 2008 with the theme, “Protecting and Empowering Migrants for Development,” the issue of migrants’ rights and protection came to the forefront of GFMD debate.

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The topic continues to be prominent, as United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s 8-point priority agenda for the Forum suggests. The agenda, delivered to the General Assembly at the second High-

Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in New York in 2013, prioritized the protection of migrants’ human rights. (Global Forum on Migration and Development, 2013a).

**Table 2: Key Global Forum on Migration and Development Themes, 2007-2012**

Themes	Number of Dedicated Roundtables
Civil Society and the Private Sector	9
Labour Migration and Mobility	8
Policy Coherence and Mainstreaming	7
Rights of Migrants	6
Governance of Migration and Coordination of Dialogue	6
Data and Research	6
Strategies for Addressing Irregular Migration and Enabling Regular Migration	5
Diasporas	4
Strategies for Minimizing Costs/Maximizing Human Development	3
Remittances	3

Source: Global Forum on Migration and Development, “Thematic Recollection from the GFMD 2007-2012: Input to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development,” April 19, 2013, [www.gfmd.org/files/documents/gfmd-thematic-recollection-2007-2012.pdf](http://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/gfmd-thematic-recollection-2007-2012.pdf).

In recent years, some of the new issues brought up at the Forum are also of special relevance to the region, such as the needs of migrants caught in crisis, stranded migrants, and environmentally induced migration.<sup>3</sup>

#### IV. Going Beyond Changing the Discourse: Three Key Steps

The Global Forum on Migration and Development has shaped discourse by creating a much-needed space for governments to discuss the opportunities and challenges migration brings. However, governments must now translate the progress achieved inside conference halls into real and tangible changes on the ground.

Migrants and their families in the Asia-Pacific continue to face pressing needs. The region is home to three-fifths of the world’s population, and many migrants within it work in low-skilled, low-wage, temporary, and unsecured jobs. A huge number are undocumented while many suffer from the abusive practices of private recruitment agencies. Women, who comprise almost 50 percent of the region’s labour migration flows, still work primarily in low-skilled occupations where they receive little protection. Further, many continue to cross borders under compulsion due to conflict, natural disasters, and other humanitarian emergencies. In

fact, the region currently hosts the largest number of refugees in the world. This significant and complex flow of people is expected to persist as long as the considerable economic and demographic disparities within and outside the region remain.

To remain a relevant actor in migration-related policymaking and governance, GFMD has to be as instrumental in shaping the reality on the ground as much as the global discourse on migration and development. As the 2012 assessment concludes, “So far, the main outcomes of the GFMD process are dialogue and bilateral contacts, exchange of good practices and policy models between participating governments, and improved consultations on migration and development between different ministries within governments.” Despite these international-level successes, the assessment highlights that its “impact at the national level is considered to be weaker.” It further notes that a number of governments “regret a lack of practical policy outcomes and a certain bias towards migration issues in contrast to development issues.” (Global Forum on Migration and Development, 2011).

GFMD civil society participants’ official statement in Mauritius reflects similar advocacy for a more action-oriented and results-driven process. Rather than advancing a set of recommendations as has been done in the earlier forums, the civil-society statement actually identified benchmarks and mechanisms for

action. It emphasizes that GFMD participants “are here for change.”<sup>4</sup>

Box 1 highlights the five objectives of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. There has been tremendous progress and success in meeting the first three objectives, which focus on promoting discourse, research, and an exchange of ideas. The last two objectives—establishing partnerships and cooperation among various actors, and structuring the future international migration agenda—have yet to be achieved.

## Box 1: Objectives of the Global Forum on Migration and Development

1. To provide a venue for policymakers and high-level policy practitioners to informally discuss relevant policies and practical challenges and opportunities of the migration-development nexus, and engage with other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, experts and migrant organizations to foster practical and action-oriented outcomes at national, bilateral and international level;
2. To exchange good practices and experiences, which can be duplicated or adapted in other circumstances, in order to maximize the development benefits of migration and migration flows;
3. To identify information, policy and institutional gaps necessary to foster synergies and greater policy coherence at national, regional and international levels between the migration and development policy areas;
4. To establish partnerships and cooperation between countries, and between countries and other stakeholders, such as international organizations, diaspora, migrants, academia etc., on migration and development;
5. To structure the international priorities and agenda on migration and development.

Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Towards the 2013 High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development: Final Report of the High-Level Dialogue Series* (New York: IOM, 2013), 11, [http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/HLD\\_Series\\_FinalReport\\_IOM\\_UNDESA\\_UNFPA\\_English.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/HLD_Series_FinalReport_IOM_UNDESA_UNFPA_English.pdf).

While the Global Forum on Migration and Development was not primarily designed as a vehicle for action, the success of its efforts to foster discourse and the pressing need for solutions to migration-related challenges should compel policymakers to assess how the Forum can facilitate concrete action. Already, it can be argued that governments have taken action in part due to discussions they have had at the Forum. Undoubtedly, GFMD could provide even more opportunities for collaboration between interested

governments and migration stakeholders (at the subnational, national, regional, and international levels) and more actively report on their progress. There is also much more to be done in terms of shaping the international priorities and agenda on migration and development given the wide range of issues that demand attention. In more effectively meeting these two objectives, the Forum may consider adopting a number of key steps, including:

## 1. Enhancing Regional Interactions

Since the first Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2007, there have been a number of discussions within the region on temporary migration, mobility, smuggling, and trafficking. For instance, the Colombo Process, a regional consultative effort for labour migration in Asia, brings together China, six South Asian countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), and four Southeast Asian countries (Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam). The process, which started in 2003, has led to projects on capacity building for labour attachés and the establishment of migrant resource centers. The Colombo Process started to take a more pronounced institutional shape at the last ministerial meeting, in Dhaka in 2011, with a review of its operating modalities. (Colombo Process, 2014).

The Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD), first hosted by the United Arab Emirates, is another key forum for discussion on migration within the region. The ADD is a ministerial consultation between the Colombo Process countries and nine destination countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia: Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. (Abu Dhabi Dialogue, 2012).

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Both the Colombo processes and ADD have issued statements strongly recognizing the positive impact of migration to both countries of origin and destination and outlining specific recommendations on moving forward.

Another active forum within the region is the Bali Process, which was established in 2002 in Indonesia to address practical issues related to smuggling, trafficking, and related transnational crime. Currently co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia, the Bali Process has 44 members from the Asia-Pacific and other regions.<sup>5</sup> (Bali Process, 2014).

Labour migration opportunities at the subregional level are also opening up. One example is the recent Skills Movement Scheme, which encourages skilled labour mobility among Melanesian Spearhead Group countries (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu) and the Front de Liberation Nationale Kanak Socialiste of New Caledonia. (Melanesian Spearhead Group, 2012).

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Similarly, the ten member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam—have agreed to facilitate the free movement of skilled labour as part of the ASEAN Economic Community’s aspiration to achieve full economic integration by 2015. Indeed, between 2005 and 2012, ASEAN member governments have signed Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs)<sup>6</sup> in eight occupations—engineering, nursing, architecture, medicine, dentistry, accountancy, land surveying, and tourism.

Improved coordination and cooperation between GFMD and these regional efforts will ensure that the knowledge and discourse at the global and regional levels permeate each other and create synergies. There are many opportunities for mutual learning and cooperation between regions that the Forum could broker and facilitate.

## 2. Encouraging People-to-People Networking

The informal and non-binding orientation of GFMD has allowed governments to engage in frank discussions on controversial issues. While it is important to keep the same level of informality in future Forum meetings, there is also scope to provide more opportunities for governments who are interested in more active collaboration. The Forum could provide or support a more dynamic platform where governments can find partners, pilot projects, test ideas, and develop and utilize various policy and programmatic tools. One way to achieve such a platform would be to create a user-friendly and highly interactive web presence that would allow GFMD participants to share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content.

The creation of the GFMD Platform for Partnerships in 2010 is a step in the right direction since it offers a space for governments to continue dialogues and initiate partnerships between annual meetings. The Platform’s website<sup>7</sup> features governments’ policies, programmes, and tools that have been inspired by GFMD discussions and recommendations. For instance, the website maintains an extensive Migration Profiles Repository, and links to two handbooks: one on diaspora engagement policies and programmes and another on mainstreaming migration into development planning.

Now that the Forum effectively gives participant governments access to a knowledge base on migration and development, the next challenge is to connect states to the people who possess this knowledge. Investment in information technology is a key factor of success towards this end. Securing the appropriate hardware and software is important in capturing GFMD participant preferences; securing real-time information on policies, projects, and programmes; communicating between interested stakeholders within countries and across borders; and allowing the general public, including migrants themselves,

to access information. Finally, monitoring the results of these people-to-people connections would be crucial for showcasing GFMD's impact on migration and development governance, and making changes as needed.

### 3. Developing an Action-Oriented, Results-Driven Process in Five Priority Areas

The new round of GFMD meetings following the 2013 High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development presents a unique opportunity for governments to further advance an already constructive, multilateral conversation on international cooperation by developing an action-oriented and results-driven process.

Official statements by Asia-Pacific governments, international organizations, and civil society members during the last GFMD and at the second High-Level Dialogue in New York point to five priority areas for the region that are ripe for cooperation, including developing a framework for assisting migrants caught in crisis, gender-responsive policies and programmes, advancing evidence-based and data-driven policymaking, addressing recruitment costs, and mainstreaming migration into development priorities at the national level and at the post-2015 development agenda.

***Migrants caught in crisis.*** A framework for international and/or regional cooperation in this area is needed because the exploitation migrant workers face is especially heightened during times of crisis. The 2011 Libyan Civil War, which displaced nearly 800,000 migrants within a span of just nine months, highlighted gaps in existing coordination and funding mechanisms and frameworks. As one example, it highlighted the ambiguity surrounding different roles that governments, international organizations, and private sector actors such as employers, recruitment agencies, and insurance companies should take. Although ad hoc cooperation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) brought relief to many of the migrants displaced by the crisis, there is currently no established international legal framework or mechanism that can fully address the situation of temporary migrant workers caught in conflicts and other crisis situations. (Kelly and Wadud, 2012). One

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positive development is that discussions about this gap at the Colombo Process led to the IOM's Migration Crisis Operational Framework and the establishment of an Emergency fund, both important steps in addressing the needs of migrants in crisis countries.

Starting late 2013, the Philippines and Bangladesh have been part of a small international working group of countries interested in developing and advancing an initiative on migrants caught in countries in crisis. The state-led group—in partnership with IOM, UNHCR, Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration, the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration and others—will explore and define the issues, evaluate best practices, collect the evidence base, and propose a way forward to strengthen the international community's capacity to better manage situations where migrants are vulnerable in countries in acute crisis.

#### ***Gender-responsive policies and programmes.***

Migration and work experiences often vary for men and women; therefore, it is crucial to address the effects of migration by gender and on gender relations, including the effect on children and families left behind. Within Asia, for instance, women migrant workers are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse given that many have low levels of education. Female domestic workers are most vulnerable since their work is confined to the home, which government authorities find hard to monitor. Indeed, a recent study by the Asian Development Bank suggests that women migrants from Indonesia and the Philippines, particularly those involved in domestic work, are more likely to have their labour rights violated by employers or recruitment agencies compared to men. (Asian Development Bank, 2013).



Since exploitative practices occur at all stages of migration—predeparture, transit, arrival, stay, and return—governments need to adopt comprehensive gender-responsive policies and programs that address the particular vulnerabilities of women migrants. This may include jointly adopting regulations that provide women’s access to sexual and reproductive health services at origin, transit, and destination. Migration also extracts substantial social costs to migrants and their families, often deeply straining the society that sends them. There is a need for jointly developed programs that assist families left behind, for instance, by supporting inclusive social services at the country of origin.

**Evidence-based and data-driven policymaking.** The call for more and better data to inform policy has been raised in every GFMD meeting over the last seven years, already producing a marked increase in research on migration and development linkages. As Peter Sutherland notes in *Migration and Development*, “Today we have far clearer insights” into the effects of migration that allow us to “build a robust set of policies.” He cites the availability of a “data-rich, measurable way to analyze the development effects of migration,” particularly the impact of remittances and how migration relates to the eight original Millennium Development Goals.<sup>8</sup> (Sutherland, 2013).

Despite the progress, comprehensive and definitive studies on the effects of migration at the national level, particularly on countries of origin, are still needed. Within the Asia-Pacific region, the quality of data on basic stocks and flows—particularly gender- and skill-disaggregated data and information on return and irregular migrants—remains poor or nonexistent. Given the paucity of even the most basic of data, the extent to which the departure of migrants might ease

unemployment, or result in a brain drain, remains highly contested in many developing countries. In particular, it is unclear how the highly skilled are moving (or not moving), and the extent of brain waste they experience—hampering initiatives to answer fundamental questions about how the movement of talent interacts with labour-market needs. In short, making migration work for development requires an improved understanding of empirical realities.

**Recruitment costs.** Governments should expend more effort in jointly lowering recruitment costs for migrants. Research has shown that migrants incur one of their largest financial costs before they actually migrate. In some corridors, recruitment costs present a much larger burden to migrants than remittance costs. For instance, the remittance cost between the Middle East and South Asia is the lowest in the world, but the recruitment cost can be astronomical: as much as a year’s worth of salary in placement fees in exchange for a three-year work contract. Recruitment-related abuse happens in all destinations and at all skill levels, but low-skilled workers in some sectors are especially vulnerable—particularly domestic work, construction, garments, agriculture, and fishing industries. These same sectors employ large numbers of women. Field studies show that low-skilled migrants generally pay more in placement fees relative to their prospective income than do high-skilled migrants.<sup>9</sup>

Migration Policy Institute research suggests that excessive and complex regulations, especially without meaningful enforcement, have created additional incentives and opportunities for unscrupulous actors to game the system. (Agunias, 2013) Therefore, an action plan to simplify and harmonize recruitment rules at origin and destination will have a direct and tremendous impact on migrants’ experiences during and beyond the recruitment phase. These may include addressing common inconsistencies (such as acceptable fees, standard employment contracts, and liability for workers), and maximizing the use of information technology to improve monitoring.

**Mainstreaming migration into national development priorities and the Post-2015 Development Agenda.** The Asia-Pacific region is arguably the most economically diverse region in the world today. Some of the world’s largest and most established economies and several emerging global players coexist alongside

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fragile developing economies. Migration can be a powerful tool for bridging this gap and supporting the region's economic growth and prosperity, but its success in accomplishing that objective depends on well-designed and carefully implemented efforts to mainstream migration to national development priorities. A growing volume of research shows the actual and potential contributions of migrants and migrant communities to sustainable development and poverty reduction in the Asia-Pacific region. However, these research findings have not been fully translated into national development priorities, and governments have struggled to distill the policy implications of this body of work. Efforts to meet this challenge are already taking place in the region. Bangladesh, for instance, is part of a pilot project on mainstreaming migration into national development strategies. Similarly, the Philippines' National Economic and Development Authority, the key development planning agency in the country, recently created an unprecedented interagency sub-committee dedicated to streamlining the integration of migration issues into mainstream development plans.

Another critical challenge for the region is how to include migration into the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Despite tremendous growth within the region, the Asia-Pacific is still home to two-thirds of the world's poor. Success in mainstreaming migration into the future global development framework that will follow the UN Millennium Development Goals is a key priority for the region, and central to the GFMD process.

## V. Conclusion

The 2014 meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development presents an important opportunity for policymakers to move beyond discourse, and use the Forum as a springboard for meaningful national plans and international cooperative initiatives in the governance of migration for the sake of development goals.

By enhancing regional interactions through exchanging information on already-established and successful examples of regional agreements; encouraging people-to-people networking that deepens policymakers' connections with each other and their access to potential pathways for future collaboration; and developing a process that focuses

on attaining specific results such as progress on data collection or recruitment, the Forum can be an even stronger platform for continuing and extending the last seven years of progress on the migration and development agenda.

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5. Afghanistan; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; Fiji; France (New Caledonia); Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Iran; Iraq; Japan; Jordan; Kiribati; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Maldives; Nauru; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Samoa; Singapore; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Syrian Arab Republic; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkey; Vanuatu; Viet Nam; United States of America; and United Arab Emirates.
6. The Mutual Recognition Agreements have been signed in accordance with the objectives of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services: to enhance cooperation in services among Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States in order to improve the efficiency and competitiveness, diversity, production capacity, and supply and distribution of services of their services suppliers within and outside ASEAN; to eliminate substantially restrictions to trade in services amongst ASEAN Member States; and to liberalize trade in services by expanding the depth and scope of liberalization beyond that undertaken under the General Agreement on Trade in Services, with the aim of realizing a free trade area in services.
7. GFMD, “Welcome to the Platform for Partnerships (PfP),” accessed 8 April 8 2014, [www.gfmd.org/pfp](http://www.gfmd.org/pfp).
8. The Millennium Development Goals are eight international development goals established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000. United Nations member states agreed to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empowering women, reduce child mortality rates, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development by 2015.
9. See for example Dovelyn Rannveig Agunias, *Guiding the Invisible Hand: Making Migration Intermediaries Work for Development*, Human Development Research Paper 2009/22 (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2009), <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/guiding-invisible-hand>.

## Endnotes

- For the purposes of this brief, the Asia-Pacific region refers only to countries and territories in East Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific: Afghanistan; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Cook Islands; Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; Fiji; French Polynesia; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Iran; Japan; Kiribati; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Federated States of Micronesia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; New Caledonia; New Zealand; Niue; Northern Mariana Islands; Pakistan; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Samoa; Singapore; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Taiwan Province of China; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Tuvalu; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.
- Other members of the Assessment Team are Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Kenya, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Sweden, and United Arab Emirates.

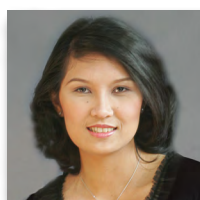
## About the Authors



**Imelda Nicolas** is Chairperson of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), a Cabinet-level secretary position under the Office of the President of the Philippines. Recently recognized by the Filipina Women’s Network as one of the “100 Most Influential Filipina Women in the World,” Secretary Nicolas has been active in the migration and development field. She currently chairs the Metropolis Asia Secretariat and is a member of the Metropolis International Steering Committee and the Experts Advisory Committee of the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) and the Migration and Integration Management Training Organization (MIMTO).

Prior to her appointment at the CFO, she was Cabinet-level Secretary of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, former Chairperson of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, and Presidential Assistant helping Cabinet secretaries in monitoring implementation of major government-funded infrastructures. She was also Chair of the Women’s Business Council of the Philippines and a board member of the Millennium Challenge Account–Philippines, Tanghalan Pilipino, and The Lewis College.

Before rejoining government in 2004, she was Vice-President for Development at TLC Beatrice International Holdings, Inc., a New York-based multinational company, and Managing Director at TLC Beatrice China. She was also the first Filipina representative in the APEC Business Advisory Council. Secretary Nicolas graduated magna cum laude from St. Theresa’s College and attended graduate studies in Arts History at Columbia University.



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Before joining MPI, Ms. Agunias was an Edward Weintal Scholar at the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy in Washington, DC and a factory worker and part-time domestic worker in Reykjavik, Iceland. She also worked as Regional Research Officer at the International Organization for Migration in Bangkok and as consultant at the World Bank in Washington, DC and in Sydney. She holds a master’s degree in foreign service, with honors, from Georgetown University, where she concentrated in international development; and a bachelor’s degree in political science, cum laude, from the University of the Philippines.

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