



Migration data for policy development

**An appraisal of data and statistics on international
labour migration in Myanmar**

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labour migration in Myanmar**

International Labour Organization

ILO Liaison Officer for Myanmar

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First published (2018)

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Title: Migration Data for Policy Development: An appraisal of data and statistics on international labour migration statistics in Myanmar

English edition

ISBN: 978-92-2-132774-5 (print)
978-92-2-132775-2 (web pdf)

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This paper was prepared by Upendrandha Choragudi, Consultant.

Printed in Yangon, Myanmar

Acknowledgements

The lead author of this report was Mr Upendrandha Chorangudi, Consultant. The report was produced under the supervision of Ms Jacqueline Pollock, Chief Technical Advisor, ILO Yangon, Ms Piyamal Pichaiwongse, Deputy Liaison Officer, ILO Myanmar, and Mr Nilim Baruah, Labour Migration Specialist, ILO Regional Office of Asia and the Pacific. Many other people contributed to this research study, the authors and the ILO thank the representatives of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, labour organizations, recruitment agencies, and civil society organizations who inputted their knowledge into this report. Importantly, we extend gratitude to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population and to the Ministry of Finance and Planning. Thanks is also due to: Hkun Sa Mun Htoi, Wai Hnin Po, Ei Mon Win, and for translation, Phyo Maung Maung Kyaw.

We thank Australia, Denmark, the European Union, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America for their kind contributions to improving the livelihoods and food security of rural people in Myanmar. We would also like to thank the Mitsubishi Corporation, as a private sector donor.

Disclaimer

This document is supported with financial assistance from Australia, Denmark, the European Union, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the Mitsubishi Corporation. The views expressed herein are not to be taken to reflect the official opinion of any of the LIFT donors.

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Abbreviations

4Mx	Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CI	Certificate of Identity
CSC	Citizenship Scrutiny Card
CSO	Central Statistical Organization
CTUM	Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar
DOL	Department of Labour
EPS	Employment Permit System
EU	European Union
FDW	foreign domestic worker [Singapore]
ILMS	International Labour Migration Statistics Database in ASEAN
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRIS	International Recruitment Integrity System
KNOMAD	Knowledge Partnership for Migration and Development
LEO	Labour Exchange Office
MMK	Myanmar kyat [currency]
MOEAF	Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation
MOLIP	Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MRC	Migration Resource Centre
NPA	National Plan of Action on International Labour Migration
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OWIC	Overseas Worker Identification Card
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOP	standard operating procedure
TRIANGLE	Tripartite Action for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers in the ASEAN Region
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Executive Summary

“We should reinforce more realistic policy debates with better data about migration.”

United Nations Secretary-General ¹

Reliable data and information are critical to the formulation and implementation of effective and responsive labour migration policies. To understand the processes, underlying factors, and implications of migration, it is important to gather and analyze reliable, timely, and accurate information and data on migration, in all its dimensions. In 2006, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration cited the collection of data as being a priority. Nevertheless, data collection on labour migration globally, regionally, and in most cases, nationally is still not comprehensive enough to support the development of evidence-based policies. More recently, the collection of data has again been prioritized with the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Target 17.18 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relates to the disaggregation of all data by migratory status with the goal of providing a method to monitor the outcomes of the sustainable development goals and targets for both migrants and non-migrants (United Nations, 2016).

SDG Target 17.18

By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts

While all SDGs include migrants, SDGs 8 and 10 refer specifically to migration and set targets and indicators for decent work for migrants and safer migration through well managed migration policies. Achieving other specific goals would also greatly impact on the safety and outcomes of migration, in particular, the reduction of corruption and the provision of legal identity for all through SDG 16, and the reduction poverty through implementation of SDG 1.

The aim of this paper is to provide practical support to policy-makers and practitioners in Myanmar on the collection of data related to migration based on the International Labour Migration Statistics in ASEAN (ILMS) methodology and the guidelines in the *Handbook for improving the production and use of migration data for development* (hereafter referred to as “the Handbook”) developed by the Global Migration Group.

¹ United Nations, 2017

Executive Summary

Since 2013, the ILO has established the ILMS Database in ASEAN and supported the completion of five rounds of national data collection. The ILMS has a gender-disaggregated database, consisting of 19 statistical tables. The work was launched in response to an identified lack of reliable, comparable or tractable data on labour migration stocks and flows in ASEAN. Several consultations were initially undertaken to determine what tables and indicators would be most useful or relevant for the work and they were validated at a technical meeting with constituents. Focal specialists were then identified in each country to return the relevant data and metadata through the International Labour Migration Questionnaire (ILMQ). Following their responses, the data were validated and finally collated to make up the International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) Database. In 2019, the ILMS will expand and become a global database. It is hoped that this paper will also assist Myanmar to collect data which will contribute to the ILMS.

The Handbook aims specifically to assist member States in their SDG obligations to collect, tabulate, analyze, disseminate, and use migration data (Global Migration Group, 2017). In addition, the Handbook provides guidance on how to integrate migration into national development planning and strategies.

By following the guidelines of the Handbook and exploring the current sources of labour migration data available in Myanmar, it is hoped that this paper will also serve as a resource for Myanmar to report on the progress of SDGs related to labour migration; stimulate new ideas for future data collection, sharing, and use; and support the integration of labour migration into national development plans.

The paper identifies how the effective collection of data could provide evidence for the development of policies in countries of origin, countries of destination, and for bilateral agreements on labour migration. Table 1 is an abridged version of a longer version in the main body of the paper.

Table 1. Data collection for policy development (abridged)

Type of data/ statistics required	Policy areas in country of origin	Policy areas in country of destination	Policy areas for both country of origin and destination
1. The Person			
Age, gender, ethnicity, language, and literacy of migrants.	Gender-appropriate recruitment and employment policies More targeted information campaigns to reach potential migrants	Gender-sensitive policies related to working and living conditions. Provision of resources to develop services and materials in major languages.	
Work skills, competency in technology. Work sectors.	Gender and diversity sensitive policies to promote appropriate vocational skills training.	Development of appropriate occupational skills training.	Skills training, accreditation, and mutual recognition agreements.

2. The Move			
Year of movement and motivation for move	Addressing negative drivers of migration. Forecasting migration trends.	Policies relating to migrants length of stay, work permits, residency rights. Eligibility for social security benefits.	Development of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) on labour migration.
Migration corridors (source to destination)	Appropriate pre-departure trainings.	Integration and social cohesion policies. Planning for essential services (health, education, sanitation).	Portable social security mechanisms for transferal of social security benefits. Development of bilateral/ cross-border committees.

Globally there are considered to be three main sources for migration statistics and data: population censuses, administrative data, and sample surveys. This paper follows these sources in the Myanmar context.

First are statistics generated by population census operations. In the case of Myanmar, the first census in 30 years was conducted in 2014 and included a question relating to household members currently living overseas. The census initially reported that there were a total of 2,021,910 migrants overseas, but through backward projection methods it was ultimately estimated that a total of 4.25 million persons (nearly 20 per cent of the Myanmar labour force) were living abroad at the time of the census. Of these migrants abroad, 70 per cent were in Thailand, 15 per cent in Malaysia, and 4 per cent in Singapore and in China, with lesser numbers in other countries.

The second method of data collection on international labour migration is through administrative data collected by different agencies during the migration process, including collection at border exit and entry points. In Myanmar, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MOLIP) is pivotal to the effective collection of data regarding labour migration.

The Labour Exchange Offices of the Department of Labour collect data on workers registering for Workers Cards, including those planning to work overseas, who are issued an Overseas Workers Job Seekers Card. The information regarding workers applying for these cards from the 78 Labour Exchange Offices located across the country are collated by the MOLIP and published by the Central Statistical Office (CSO). The published figures are not gender-disaggregated.

To migrate regularly, workers need an Overseas Workers' Identification Card (OWIC),² as well as the previously mentioned Overseas Workers Job Seekers Card. The OWIC together with the verification of the employment contract is carried out at only three designated DOL offices: the LEO at North Dagon, Yangon; the LEO at Myawaddy; and the No.2 Industrial Training School in Aung Myay Thar Zan Township, Mandalay.

The Department of Labour provides annual figures of migrants going overseas based on the issuing of OWICs and according to the figures for 2015–16, a total of 105,616 migrants went overseas, with 62,800 going to Thailand and 35,967 going to Malaysia. This information is also not gender-disaggregated.

² This card is commonly referred to as the "Smart Card".

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The MOLIP also collects information on migrants in Thailand and Malaysia through the issuance of temporary passports or Certificates of Identity. At the Overseas Employment Supervisory Committee, 1/2018 held on December 9th 2018, the Global New Light of Myanmar reported that the Union Minister announced that 1,099,586 undocumented Myanmar workers in Thailand had been issued with Certificates of Identity and their bio matrix data scanned, recorded and stored in the National Data Centre in Nay Pyi Taw which could be shared if other departments requested it. According to the report, the same type of data was collected for 1,265,688 other workers overseas as of December 2nd 2018.

Migrants leaving Myanmar with all the necessary documents in place, have to apply for a Passport for Jobs (PJ) from the Passport Issuing Offices of the Ministry of Home Affairs. There is a database for the number of these passports issued, although it is not made public.

The Department of Immigration records the entry and exit of people at official border points, including the Yangon and Mandalay international airport and official border crossings with China (Muse, Lwejel, Kanpikete, Chinshwehaw, Kengtung); with Thailand (Tachilek, Myawaddy, Kawthaung, Myeik, HteeKhee, MawTaung, Mae Sa); Bangladesh (Sittwe, Maungtaw); and India (Tamu, Reed). This data is not made public.

The Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation (MOEAF) and individual agencies, are legally bound by the Law Relating to Overseas Employment (1999) to send to the Department of Labour a list of workers who have been sent overseas as well as their departure date, documentation of services fees, and employment contracts, and agencies must retain these documents for five years and present them to officials if requested. The MOEAF is required to submit a compiled list of workers on a monthly basis to the Department. The CSO publishes these as combined figures without any breakdown by gender or country of destination.

The third method of collection of data on labour migration is from sample surveys, such as large household or labour force surveys. In Myanmar, the 2015 Labour Force Survey provided information on former household members living abroad, finding that 1.2 million Myanmar people were living abroad, with 60 per cent being male and 40 per cent female.

Other information can be found in two World Bank sample surveys: the Myanmar Poverty and Living Conditions Survey 2014–2015 and the Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2016–2017.

A type of passenger survey is also conducted at Yangon International Airport through the Migrant Workers Reporting Counters of the Department of Labour, where migrants leaving from and returning to the country are supposed to report on a voluntary basis. Scans are reportedly made of OWICs, passports, and information collected on the migrant's country of destination and recruitment agency.

Some data is also available through civil society organizations, who provide safe migration training as well as assistance to migrants who have experienced problems in the migration process.

In addition to exploring data collection within Myanmar, this report looks briefly at data collected on Myanmar migrants in countries of destination. For example, Thailand has for many years published extensive data on the Department of Employment website detailing the nationality, gender, migration status, work sector, and place of work of migrant workers in Thailand. As of September 2018 the

number of Myanmar workers in Thailand was recorded as 2,202,394 migrants, of whom 1,038,584 had had their nationality verified; 385,011 were in Thailand through the MOU process, 777,217 were awaiting nationality verification and 1,582 were seasonal workers with cross border passes (Department of Employment, Royal Thai Government). Thailand also keeps records of dependents of migrants, trafficking victims, of migrants from medical examinations and treatment, and from attendance at Thai schools.

Challenges

Most migrants from Myanmar are undocumented in two senses: They themselves have no documents, and they are not documented in statistics on international migration. The following are challenges related to data on Myanmar migrants:

- It is difficult to compare labour migration data – even within Myanmar – due to a range of reasons including:
 - the use of different definitions for “migrants”;
 - collection over different time periods (monthly, annual, quarterly, 10-yearly); and
 - different levels of data collected. Most significantly not all data was gender-disaggregated.
- Data is not generally in the public domain.
- A large proportion of Myanmar migrants do not migrate through regular channels and therefore are not counted at Labour Exchange Offices; do not get OWICs; do not get a Passport for Jobs; or exit through an official channel.
- Private sector enterprises have their own interests and prefer not to share their business interests, despite being legally bound to do so.

Furthermore, although this report is only looking at data concerning work-related migration, people often move for a variety of reasons or their reasons for staying change over time. Attributing migration to a single reason can be misleading and result in inappropriate policies being developed.

Lastly, freedom of movement is a basic right, and if people fulfill the immigration and labour requirements of the country of destination, singling them out for data collection could be construed as discriminatory or controlling.

Recommendations in brief

There is a need for reliable, disaggregated data by sex, age and migratory status and for internationally comparable indicators to support evidence-based policymaking. This will require investment in collection and analysis by Member States, in line with existing global guidelines on migration statistics, which the United Nations can support. Countries should include migration-relevant questions in population censuses, including not only questions of country of birth or citizenship but also dates or years of arrival and motivation to move. This would allow for an estimation of recent movements and the drivers of migration (United Nations, 2017).

The following is a brief overview of the statistical information that is needed on Myanmar labour migrants' characteristics over time:

- demographic and socio-economic characteristics, including countries of destination;
- share of labour migrants in the total work force;
- occupations and skills;
- economic sectors;
- labour force participation (formal/informal sector)
- status in employment;
- migration status (documented/undocumented)
- working conditions (working hours, wages, resting period, and other contractual conditions etc.);
- social security coverage;
- length of stay;
- emerging changes in existing and new migration corridors;
- drivers of labour migration;
- contribution to/impact of labour migration on sending and receiving countries (labour markets, share of GDP, job creation, poverty reduction, human development, etc.);
- remittances;
- all information needs to be disaggregated by gender, age, work sector, language, migration status, and where appropriate, religion and ethnicity.

In order to collect and utilize the above data for reporting purposes and for the development of policy, the report proposes the following recommendations:

1. Adoption of standard definition and concepts regarding labour migration – A whole of government approach to data collection would involve adopting standard definitions and concepts for labour migration. This would allow for comparisons of data between Ministries and for the formulation of coherent policies.
2. Improved capacity of Central Statistical Office, MOLIP and all relevant agencies to collect, store, analyze, and disseminate data.
3. Develop an integrated system of migration data management.
4. Introducing a well-designed statistical database that includes a unique identification number (e.g., passport or Certification of Identity number, OWIC number) for administrative records which will allow the national statistical system to accurately estimate of the number of migrants.
5. Improved coordination and cooperation – Harmonize data collection to ensure comparability and to coordinate the collection of data. Establish a clear channel of communication between the data users (policy-makers) and the data producers (including the CSO). Form a labour migration policy group involving a broad array of labour migration stakeholders, including representation from the CSO and parties with both technical and policy expertise.
6. Accessibility and dissemination – Enhancing the dissemination of data directly from the source and through the CSO is critical to increasing the level of information available in the public domain.
7. Mainstreaming labour migration – Data can be collected by the inclusion of questions about migration in local statistical and data systems, including censuses, household surveys, and labour force surveys.
8. Ethical collection of data – Develop national laws to comply with international rules on data protection and ensure that the right to privacy is respected in the collection, storage, use, and dissemination of such data.
9. Participation – Participation of migrant populations and their support groups in the design of surveys and other data collection instruments (and in the dissemination and analysis of data) will improve the relevance and quality of the statistics.
10. Data collection opportunities – Consider potential collection opportunities at the State and regional level; at the ASEAN level; through embassies in destination countries; and through Labour organizations and civil society organizations in Myanmar and overseas.
11. Big data – Greater sharing of aggregate information by financial services agencies.
12. Improving data collection on the health of migrants – Introduce standardized indicators, and conduct analyses of health trends derived from medical examinations prior to departure and upon return.

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13. Improve data collection on the cost of sending remittances.
14. Improve data on the impact of remittances at the household level.
15. Improving data on irregular migrants – Explore innovative ways to collect data on irregular migrants without endangering the migrants. For example, through the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism (4Mx), which engages local monitors to collect basic information tracking people on the move through mobile phone applications so that information can be easily centralized³.
16. Improving data collection on the education of migrant children – Ensure that the responsibility for monitoring the situation of migrant children be shared by all countries involved, including transition and destination countries in addition to in Myanmar.
17. Coordinate with countries of destination to collect data on Myanmar nationals working abroad.

³ More details of 4MX are provided in Section 3 below.

1. Introduction

Reliable data and information are critical to the formulation and implementation of effective and responsive labour migration policies. To understand the processes, underlying factors, and implications of migration, it is important to gather and analyze reliable, timely, and accurate information and data on migration, in all its dimensions. In 2006, the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration made the collection of data a priority. Nevertheless, over a decade later, data collection on labour migration globally, regionally, and in most cases, nationally is still not comprehensive enough to support the development of evidence based policies.

The need for better data collection on labour migration for policy development has been noted in Myanmar. Discussions on the drafting of the second five year Myanmar National Plan of Action on International Labour Migration 2018–2022 (NPA) have identified several areas where data collection would contribute to better policy development. These include safe migration, regulation of brokers, provision of welfare and protection services to children of migrant families, remittances and their impacts on local communities, living and working condition of Myanmar migrant workers, and the socio-economic background of migrant workers in their households. Furthermore, a section entitled “Improving the Governance and Administration of Labour Migration” has been proposed which would devote an entire strategic objective and policy area to labour migration data management systems. It proposes establishing a centrally managed Labour Migration Information System within the Department of Labour to produce monthly reports on sex-disaggregated registration data detailing numbers, characteristics, destinations, and other key information. It also proposes the preparation of an annual report on deployment to be made publically available on the website.

More generally, the Myanmar Government’s 2016 National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) identifies the need for a robust statistical base for policy formulation, while also identifying multiple challenges in terms of quality, reliability, utilization, and underutilization. Noting the information gathering limitations of line departments, which often tend to focus on their own specific purposes, the NSDS identifies the need for modern, efficient platforms for data collection and processing in order to support policy-making.

Indeed, Myanmar is committed to improving its data collection through its obligations to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Target 17.18 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relates to the disaggregation of all data by a variety of factors, including migratory status. This could provide insights into the impact of sustainable development on migration and the impact of migration on sustainable development (United Nations, 2016).

SDG Target 17.18

By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts

Introduction

While all of the SDGs include migrant workers, several make specific mention to migration and provide targets and indicators for which there will be a need for data and information to provide statistics for reports. Progress towards achieving other particular goals may have a significant impact on the outcomes of migration.

Indicators against which the government will report are classified according to tiers related to how easy it will be to report on the indicator taking into consideration already established monitoring systems.

Box 1. Definitions of Tiers for SDG Indicators

Tier 1: Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant.

Tier 2: Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries.

Tier 3: No internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested.

based on an updated explanation as developed by the IAEG-SDG at the 5th Meeting in March 2017

Technical agencies with expertise in particular areas have been assigned as custodians of particular indicators. Custodians are the lead agencies responsible for compiling comparable data in the different statistical domains, supporting increased adoption and compliance with internationally agreed standards and strengthening national statistical capacity; as well as preparing the story line for the annual global progress report.

The SDGs, targets, and indicators relevant to labour migration are outlined in table 2 below with suggestions on the type of information or data that could be collected in relation to each one:

Table 2. Labour migration data needed for SDGs

SDG	SDG Targets	SDG Indicators, Updated Tier Classification (May 2018) Custodian Agency	Relevant data
1. End Poverty in all its forms everywhere.	1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/ systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable Tier 2, ILO	Statistics of migrants Covered by social security in Myanmar prior to departure and on return Covered by social security in countries of destination Workplace injuries and deaths in destination
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.	8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environment for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants and those in precarious employment.	8.8.1 Frequency rate of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries by sex and migrant status. Tier 2, ILO 8.8.2 Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on ILO textual sources and national legislation by sex and migrant status. Tier 3, ILO	Statistics from: ■ overseas employment agencies; ■ self-reported by migrants; ■ labour attachés; ■ country of destination official statistics for fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries.
	8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the ILO	8. b.1 Existence of a developed and operationalized national strategy for youth employment, as a distinct strategy or a part of a national employment strategy. Tier 3, ILO	Statistics on Employment in decent work overseas of youth Trends and patterns
	10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.	10.7.1 Recruitment costs borne by employee as a proportion of yearly income earned in country of destination. Tier 3, ILO, World Bank	Maintain detailed data on recruitment and deployment costs, including all fees, expenses, and costs incurred with details of person responsible.

Introduction

SDG	SDG Targets	SDG Indicators ,Updated Tier Classification (May 2018) Custodian Agency	Relevant data
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.	10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.	10.7.2 Number of countries that have implemented well-managed migration policies. Tier 3, DESA, Population Division; IOM	Revised Law Relating to Overseas Employment. Semiannual reports on implementation of NPA. Transparent and accessible bilateral labour agreements and MOUs. Standard employment contracts.
	10.C By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%.	10.C Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted. Tier 2, World Bank	The ILO and the World Bank are the development partners supporting developing the methodology for this indicator Data on different remittance service providers, cost, efficiency, convenience, and speed.
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, promote access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.	16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.	16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months. Tier 2, UNODC	Online anonymous self-reporting of bribe paying by migrants.
	16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.	16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years old whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age. Tier 1, UNSD, UNICEF	Information campaigns by embassies, with records of births registered. Public data from countries of destination.
1. End Poverty in all its forms everywhere.	1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measures as people living on less than US\$1.25 a day.	1.1.1 Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex and age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural). Tier 1, World Bank, Partner ILO	Comparative studies of households with overseas migrants and households with no overseas migrants.

SDG	SDG Targets	SDG Indicators ,Updated Tier Classification (May 2018) Custodian Agency	Relevant data
17. Strengthen the means of implementation, and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.	17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to increase significantly the availability of high quality, timely, and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.	17.18.1 Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level, with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Tier 3, UNSD	Integrate migratory status into all national data collection tools.

The aim of this paper is to provide practical support to policy-makers and practitioners in Myanmar on the collection of data related to migration based on the International Labour Migration Statistics in ASEAN (ILMS) methodology and the guidelines in the *Handbook for improving the production and use of migration data for development* (hereafter referred to as “the Handbook”) developed by the Global Migration Group.

Since 2013, the ILO has established the ILMS Database in ASEAN and supported the completion of five rounds of national data collection. The ILMS has a gender-disaggregated database, consisting of 19 statistical tables. The work was launched in response to an identified lack of reliable, comparable or tractable data on labour migration stocks and flows in ASEAN. Several consultations were initially undertaken to determine what tables and indicators would be most useful or relevant for the work and they were validated at a technical meeting with constituents. Focal specialists were then identified in each country to return the relevant data and metadata through the International Labour Migration Questionnaire (ILMQ). Following their responses, the data were validated and finally collated to make up the International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) Database. In 2019, the ILMS will expand and become a global database. It is hoped that this paper will also assist Myanmar to collect data which will contribute to the ILMS.

The Handbook aims specifically to assist member States in their SDG obligations to collect, tabulate, analyze, disseminate, and use migration data (Global Migration Group, 2017). In addition, the Handbook provides guidance on how to integrate migration into national development planning and strategies.

By following the guidelines of the Handbook and exploring the current sources of labour migration data available in Myanmar, it is hoped that this paper will also serve as a resource for Myanmar to report on the progress of SDGs related to labour migration; stimulate new ideas for future data collection, sharing, and use; and support the integration of labour migration into national development plans.

The paper identifies how the effective collection of data could provide evidence for the development of policies in countries of origin, countries of destination, and for bilateral agreements on labour migration. Table 1 is an abridged version of a longer version in the main body of the paper.

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Other guidelines which can assist in the collection of data include:

- the United Nations' (UN's) Recommendations on statistics of international migration (UNDESA, Statistical Division, 1998);
- the UN's Handbook for measuring international migration through population censuses (United Nations, 2017);
- the UN's Principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses (UNDESA, Statistical Division, 2008);
- Guide on developing an international labour migration statistics database in ASEAN: Towards more effective data collection and sharing (ILO, 2015);
- Analytical report on the international labour migration statistics database in ASEAN: Improving data collection for evidence-based policy-making (ILO, 2015);
- International labour migration statistics - A guide for policymakers and statistics organizations in the Pacific (ILO Office for Pacific Islands, 2015);
- Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 of the European Parliament on Community Statistics on Migration and International Protection. (Official Journal of the European Union, 11 July 2007)

To ensure that migration statistics are meaningful, it is important that there are also good sets of data available about labour. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160) sets out the minimum guidelines encompassing the collection, compilation, and publication of basic labour statistics. Countries ratifying Convention No. 160 report annually on their application of the Convention, which is then followed by a technical evaluation carried out by ILO's Department of Statistics.

1.1 Definitions and Key Concepts

Collection of data on labour migration is not without its complexities and challenges. Comparisons of international data on labour migration are difficult, because not all countries or even departments use the same definitions of key concepts.

Indeed, there is still no single legal definition of a migrant, the UN's *Handbook for measuring international migration through population censuses* defines migrants as persons who have changed their place of usual residence (UNDESA, Population Division, 2017).

The UN's *Recommendations on international migration statistics* defines international migrants by the criterion of duration of stay. Long-term international migrants are defined as those who move to a country other than their country of usual residence for a period of at least one year; while short-term international migrants are people who move to a country for a period of at least three months but less than one year (UNDESA, Statistics Division, 2008).

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990, defines a migrant worker as a "person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national" (Article 2).

In summary, international migrants are generally defined by the following criteria:

- Movement from one country to another country by crossing a border
- Change in usual residence (usual residence is defined as the country in which a person lives, that is the country in which he or she has a place to live where he or she normally spends the daily period of rest. Temporary travel abroad for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage does not change a person's residence.)
- Minimum duration of stay and
- Citizenship, nationality, birthplace

By adopting definitions and concepts that have more international traction, information produced in Myanmar will be able to feed into broader policy debates.

On a practical level, distinguishing between short- and long-term migrants can be difficult. Immigration documents, visas, entry and exit stamps, length of work permits, and residence permits may tell part of the picture, but do not always convey the full picture. Labour migrants do not maintain the same status over their working life. Many move between various states of regularity and irregularity, sometimes being counted and other times not, and thus often challenging even the best of data systems.

Policies and interventions for labour migrants (i.e., those working in manual work or the lower end of the service industry) differ greatly from policies and interventions for professional migrants. While there is therefore a need to disaggregate the data by occupation or type of work or purpose of stay, attributing migration to a single reason can be misleading and result in policy development that does not respond to the whole picture. For example, a migrant might be working as a labourer, but fulfilling their main purpose for migrating and studying evening classes. People often move for a variety of reasons or their reasons for staying change over time.

The UN Convention on Migrant Workers (1990) provides further categorizations of migrants:

- *Frontier worker*: migrant worker who retains his or her habitual residence in a neighbouring State to which he or she normally returns every day or at least once a week
- *Seasonal worker*: migrant worker whose work by its character is dependent on seasonal conditions and is performed only during part of the year;
- *Seafarer (including fishermen)*: refers to a migrant worker employed on board a vessel registered in a State of which he or she is not a national

Remittances are defined as household income from foreign economies, cash or non-cash in terms of reporting on the progress to the indicators for the SDGs.

1.2 Challenges

Collecting information about undocumented migrants presents the biggest challenge. The very nature of being undocumented is to live clandestinely and avoid being counted or recorded or registered anywhere. Unless a sincere amnesty has been implemented, figures on undocumented migrants are mostly estimates from studies, workplaces, or information gathered from relatives who stayed behind.

Although there are more opportunities for countries of destination to collect data – for example, through the immigration visa system or provision of work permits, identity cards, social security, or insurance cards – the information collected from the various relevant ministries is not always shared, and their methods of counting may be different. Beyond that, undocumented migrants often do not possess any of these documents. In addition, exposing the size of the migrant population can be used as a political tool or to provoke racial and ethnic hatred, and some countries of destination therefore choose not to make the data public.

Data collected in countries of origin and in countries of destination may differ greatly, and the differences may create embarrassment or political tensions between the two countries.

The current lack of evidence on the development impacts of migration makes it a challenge to integrate migration into national development plans and strategies.

Lastly, freedom of movement is a basic right and if people fulfill the immigration and labour requirements of the country of destination, singling them out for data collection could be construed as discriminatory or controlling.

1.3 Data collection for policy interventions

It is in this context that this paper explores current sources of labour migration data in Myanmar and to some extent in the countries of destination, and discusses the types of information and data needed to develop policies on labour migration. Taking into account the challenges mentioned above, the need for more evidence-based policy formulation on labour migration, and the obligations to collecting data for the SDGs, the paper proposes a log frame that could be further developed by relevant departments to prioritize areas of urgency for data collection (see Table 3).

Table 3. Data collection for policy development, full version

Type of data/ statistics required	Policy areas in country of origin	Policy areas in country of Destination	Policy areas for both country of origin and destination
1. The Person			
Age, gender, ethnicity, language, and literacy of migrants.	Gender-appropriate recruitment and employment policies. Information campaigns to reach potential migrants under-represented in migration figures.	Gender-sensitive policies related to working and living conditions. Provision of resources to develop services and materials for major language groups.	
Work skills, competency in technology.	Gender- and diversity-sensitive policies to promote appropriate vocational skills training.	Development of appropriate occupational skills training.	Skills training, accreditation, and mutual recognition agreements.
2. The Move			
Demand for migrant workers (by sector, gender, age, countries).	Employment policies. Job matching. Skills training.	Job matching	Development of cross-country MOUs on employment of workers.
Year of movement and motivation for move.	Addressing negative drivers of migration. Forecasts and preparation for returning migrants.		Policies relating to migrants' length of stay, work permits, and residency rights.
Source areas: detailed information on migrants and place of origin.	Social service planning for family members who remain. Addressing security and land grabbing issues for recently depopulated areas. Job creation policies. Development of local tailor made policies. Management of brokers locally. Policies for return and reintegration.	Preparation for migrants' orientation (appropriate language materials, cultural shocks)	

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Type of data/ statistics required	Policy areas in country of origin	Policy areas in country of Destination	Policy areas for both country of origin and destination
Migration corridors (source to destination).	Appropriate pre-departure trainings. Preparation of financial services.	Integration and social cohesion policies. Planning for essential services (health, education, sanitation).	Development of MOUs at the national level or where appropriate covering source to destination to manage migration, the provision of social protection, and mechanisms for transferal of social security benefits. Twinning of origin and destination countries for mutual support and development. Development of contacts between appropriate authorities in both countries
Returning migrants (age, gender, occupation, health status, ethnicity, skills).	Policies to offer post return options: ■ support for small and medium enterprises; ■ local employment; ■ overseas employment; ■ vocational skills development; and ■ further education Financial services, including loans for small businesses		
Returning children (working children, children of migrants), educational qualifications, health status, languages.	Educational needs. School enrollment. Documentation/citizenship.		Mutual recognition of educational qualifications.
Data on household level impacts of remittances.	Financial literacy interventions. Access to financial services.		

Type of data/ statistics required	Policy areas in country of origin	Policy areas in country of Destination	Policy areas for both country of origin and destination
3. The Issues			
Comprehensive database on complaints and grievances.	Regulating overseas employment agencies. Alerts to problematic areas in need of policy intervention. Appointment and role of Labour Attachés.	Alertness to problematic sectors, employers, and high risks for trafficking that require policy intervention.	Grievance redressal policies (ombudsman); consular support policies. Development of MOUs or standard operating procedures (SOPs) on complaints and remedies. Development of MOUs or SOPs for transferal of compensation.
Labour supply and demands.	Longer-term employment policy and skills training planning. Job matching.	Longer-term employment policy and skills training planning. Job matching.	
Health status of potential and returned migrants.	Alertness to the need for public health interventions. Alertness to occupational problems that require policy intervention with country of destination.	Alertness to occupational problems or well-being problems that need policy interventions.	Coordinated medical examinations with treatment offered, and prevention education.
Data on remittances: quantum, sending methods.	Development of appropriate financial services. National GDP. Foreign exchange.	Financial services.	Banking and financial services between countries.
Data on country-level impact of remittances and migration.	Social and economic planning. Sustainable development planning.		
Documentation processes (i.e., Certificate of Identity, IDs, passports, work permits, data from amnesties).	Citizenship policies. Absentee voting.	Stateless/refugee identification and support.	Documentation and regularization processes.

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Type of data/ statistics required	Policy areas in country of origin	Policy areas in country of Destination	Policy areas for both country of origin and destination
Data on recruitment agencies, brokers.	Ethical recruitment. Code of Conduct. Anti-corruption. Regulation of brokers. Anti- trafficking.	Anti-corruption. Anti-trafficking.	Cross-country codes of conduct on ethical recruitment and on employment of migrant workers.
Irregular migrants.	Nationality Verification and citizenship policies. Recruitment costs and procedures Birth and death certificates	Regularization/amnesty programmes.	

Source: Compiled by author.

1.3 Methodology

This paper is prepared based on a review of existing data available in the public domain, and through personal interviews with functionaries from relevant government departments involved in the collection of data related to migration or involved in the development of policies related to labour migration, particularly the Department of Labour, Migration Division, Population Division, and Central Statistical Organization (CSO).⁴ Information on data and statistics has also been gathered from overseas employment agencies, the Union Election Commission, research reports, and from publically available statistics from countries of destination.

Unfortunately, most of the data collected on migration is not available in the public domain, and in many cases Myanmar Government departments were only able to share information about the type of data that was being collected, not the actual data itself. This paper is developed within these limitations, and provides an outline as to what data is currently being collected, how it is being collected, for what purpose, and with whom it is shared. Where the data is publically available, the statistics are reproduced in the paper. The paper also provides recommendations on how this data could be used to assist in the development of evidence-based policies, as well as identifying key areas where there is a need for more data or more systematic collection of data.

The paper is divided into three sections: the current section introducing the justification and purpose for the development of the paper; Section 2 presenting sources of data for labour migration and summarizing the data currently available in Myanmar; and Section 3 offering recommendations.

⁴ Annex I presents details of the interviews conducted for the preparation of this paper.

2. Sources of data and statistics on labour migration

In this section, current sources of statistics and data in Myanmar on the international labour migration of Myanmar citizens are mapped out, with a focus on the form and content, processing and analysis, and if and how the data is shared and disseminated. The section also looks at international sources of information and sources in countries of destination for Myanmar migrants.

Globally there are considered to be three main sources for migration statistics and data. First, there are statistics generated by population census operations; second, there are administrative data collected by various responsible agencies during the migration process, including collection at border exit and entry points; and third, from sample surveys, such as large household surveys.

2.1 Myanmar Population and Housing Census (2014 Census)

2.1.1 Background

The 2014 Population Census provided the Government and other stakeholders with essential information on the population with regard to demographic, social, and economic characteristics; housing conditions; and household amenities. It was especially important because it was the first time a household census had been conducted in Myanmar for 30 years.

The Department of Population at the former Ministry of Immigration and Population⁵ (in collaboration with the UN Population Fund) was the department in charge of census operations in accordance with the Population and Housing Census Law, 2013. Carrying out the census involved large-scale mobilization of human resources, technical support, and training from development partners, which began in 2011, and the household questionnaire was administered on the night of 29 March 2014. In some conflict areas in Shan State, Kachin State, Kayin State, and parts of Northern Rakhine State enumeration could not be conducted.

2.1.2 Information collected on labour migration through the census

The census of 2014 gathered information on international migration by asking questions about family members who were currently living abroad. The data gathered includes age, sex, relationship to the head of the household, the year of family member's departure, and the current country of residence.

The Census counted 2.02 million former household members, or 3.9 per cent of the total population, who were living abroad (Table 4). Of these, 1,366,293 were recent emigrants (that is they migrated in 2010 or later); all other migrants are categorized as lifetime migrants (Department of Population, 2016). According to the census, 69 per cent of overseas migrants are men and 31 per cent are women. Migrants going to Thailand, which hosts 70 per cent of all Myanmar migrants, are more evenly divided between men and women, with 57 per cent being men and 43 per cent being women. There is a similar division of migrants going to China, while Singapore has slightly more women than men, according to the census. The smaller numbers of women migrating suggests that there are fewer job opportunities for women abroad, and calls for an examination of gender equality in

⁵ Currently the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MOLIP)

Sources of data and statistics on labour migration

employment opportunities overseas. Countries with predominantly male migrant populations may also require particular policy developments to address issues particularly related to men.

Table 4. Number of Myanmar migrants overseas, 2014 Population Census

Country of destination	By gender				All migrants	
	Male	%	Female	%	Total no.	%
Thailand	812 798	57	605 674	42	1 418 472	70
Malaysia	245 772	81	58 224	19	303 996	15
Singapore	39 078	49	40 581	51	79 659	4
China	53 126	57	39 137	42	92 263	4
Japan	4 314	97	3 283	43	7 597	0.4
Republic of Korea	14 118	61	474	3	14 592	0.7
India	10 917	58	7 058	39	17 975	0.9
USA	21 937	62	15 640	41	37 577	2
Other	31 108	61	18 671	37	49 779	2
Total	1 233 168	61	788 742	39	2 021 910	100

Source: Population Division, 2016b, table C-4.

An understanding of the sub-national dimensions of migration can inform formulation of policies related to job creation, labour supply and demand, and social service provision for those who remain as well as improved financial services to gain from the large amounts of remittances coming through these corridors. The census also provided data on the migration corridors from the state or region of origin to the current country of destination (Table 5).

Table 5. Origin (by state) and destination (by country) of Myanmar migrants

State/region of origin	No. of household members living overseas			By top destinations		
	Total no. of migrants (% of state population)	Men	Women	No. 1 destination	No. 2 destination	No.3 destination
Mon State	426586 (20.7%)	245564	181022	Thailand (385487)	Malaysia (32620)	Singapore (4324)
Kayin State	322461 (20.4%)	173430	149331	Thailand (304980)	Malaysia (12864)	Singapore (1150)
Shan State	235869 (4%)	116054	119815	Thailand (179783)	China (42490)	Malaysia (5749)
Tanintharyi	203232 (14.4%)	112834	90398	Thailand (187968)	Malaysia (12879)	Singapore (685)
Bago Region	169691 (3.4%)	110367	59324	Thailand (129069)	Malaysia (26564)	Singapore (6529)
Yangon Region	166698 (2.2%)	109855	56843	Malaysia (45593)	Singapore (33910)	Thailand (32791)
Rakhine State	115502 (3.6%)	94903	20599	Thailand (74730)	Malaysia (28200)	China (7833)
Magway Region	84422 (2.1%)	62023	18399	Thailand (36674)	Malaysia (30020)	China (11454)
Mandalay Region	80071 (1.29%)	59578	20493	Malaysia (30998)	Thailand (28334)	China (8239)
Sagaing Region	64252 (1.2%)	43686	20566	Malaysia (27184)	India (9012)	Thailand (7981)
Ayeyawady Region	59488 (0.9%)	42572	16916	Thailand (29382)	Malaysia (16704)	Singapore (8021)
Chin State	51545 (10.7%)	33975	17570	Malaysia (27016)	USA (12117)	India (5880)
Kachin State	21840 (1.2%)	10163	11317	Thailand (9250)	China (6137)	Malaysia (2712)
Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory	11928 (1%)	9244	2684	Thailand (6214)	Malaysia (3679)	
Kayah State	8385 (2.9%)	4920	3465	Thailand (5601)	Malaysia (1134)	Singapore (716)

Source: Table : ILO 2015a ; Data : Population Division, 2016b, table C-5

Sources of data and statistics on labour migration

Mon State reported the highest number of household members living overseas, with one district – Mawlamyine – reporting 25.2 per cent of its population having migrated, mainly to Thailand; compared to 20.7 per cent for the whole state. Mon State is in close proximity to Thailand, and Mawlamyine is a major transportation hub onwards to the Thai border. Kayin State, the state with the second highest number of migrants, borders directly onto Thailand and is home to one of the major land border crossings, Myawaddy to Mae Sot. Hpa An, like Mawlamyine, is at a major crossroads with routes heading for Thailand, and 25.6 per cent of its population were reported to be living overseas. Tanintharyi, which also borders with Thailand further south, reported 14.4 per cent of its population living abroad. Dawei is the biggest town closest to the Htee Kee crossing to Phu Nam Ron (Kanchanburi) in Thailand, and reported the largest number of people leaving, 132,231 or 26.2 per cent of the population. The other major crossing to Thailand is the sea crossing at Kawthaung to Ranong. Situated at the southernmost tip of Myanmar, Tanintharyi is also the state closest to Malaysia (ILO, 2015a).

2.1.3 Limitations of census data on labour migration

While censuses are recognized as a major source of statistics due to their principle of universal coverage, they are limited in the number of questions they can ask about migration. And for countries of origin, since they only capture people in the country at the time of the census, they depend on other people to report on members of the household currently overseas. This is problematic, especially for Myanmar where families may have been fearful to report relatives who had migrated irregularly. Furthermore, in some cases, whole households had migrated and no one was left to provide their statistics (ILO, 2015a).

The 2014 Census *Thematic report on migration and urbanization* acknowledges that the number of migrants is likely to be higher than what was reported, and through backward projection methods, the report estimates that a total of 4.25 million persons (nearly 20 per cent of the Myanmar labour force) were living abroad at the time of the census (Population Division, 2016a).

Finer details like re-emigration or duration of stay abroad, or number of countries transited (both intermediate and final destinations) would give greater insights into the journeys and characteristics of migrants, but they cannot be captured in the data. Such information may be helpful in developing policies in relation to social security, citizenship rights, upgrading of skills, and re-integration of return migrants.

2.2 Administrative data

Large amounts of data are collected for administrative purposes by government departments who manage the migration process. Information from migrants is collected by the labour department during the processes of approvals, by immigration and border control systems before and during actual transit, and by other administrative agencies that facilitate the process. This data is primarily for administrative purposes and for record keeping, as responsible departments are expected to provide certain public service obligations to citizens and to some extent this defines the type of data collected in terms of its details. Such data is collected both in the country of origin as well as in countries of destination.

2.2.1 Data compiled by Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Ministry of Planning and Finance

Monthly, quarterly, and annual reports by the CSO bring together statistical compilations of data and information from various line ministries. Statistics related to macroeconomic indicators, vital demographic statistics, and sectorial performance indicators pertaining to various ministries form the core data and information that is available from the CSO. The data and statistics are shared with the public through three periodic publications: the *Myanmar statistical yearbook*, the *Quarterly statistics bulletin*, and selected monthly economic indicators. The annual statistical yearbook is also available in a CD-ROM format.

As part of Ministry of Planning and Finance, the CSO has the mandate of collation, organization, and dissemination of statistical information. It also ensures quality control and adherence to sampling and research protocols for all the large sample surveys and data collection activities undertaken by various line departments.

Another significant mandate of the CSO is to compile and share baseline information on the SDGs and their periodic monitoring. It also provides information to the UN statistical systems and other global databases related to socio economic statistics.

The CSO gathers information from various ministries and their departments on a periodic basis.⁶ The details of required information, the formats, and the periodicity of information that is sought from the CSO are agreed through joint meetings. Since the CSO has no independent data collection process, it depends on the line departments to bring any data or information out into the public domain.

With specific reference to data on international labour migration, there is somewhat limited data available through these published reports. On a monthly and annual basis the CSO publishes the number of overseas workers that have been placed in different countries through the Labour Exchange Offices; this data pertains only to the regular channels of migration (see Table 6).

⁶ Personal interview conducted with CSO officials on 19 December 2017.

Table 6. Labour Exchange Offices' employment figures

	2015-2016		2016-2017		
Domestic	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Newly registered	249 419	296 858	335 222	276 448	289 513
Job vacancies	54 413	55 902	43 006	52 118	55 983
Submitted for vacancies	55 550	56 817	45 199	55 050	57 495
Person placed	53 763	56 008	42 502	51 749	55 371
Registered live and pending at the end of the reference period	779 116	866 920	939 036	961 946	985 980
Overseas workers ¹	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Thai	12 825	19 293	25 166	31 427	26 736
Malaysia	11 419	9 301	8 308	8 943	7 368
Republic of Korea	613	806	2 476	1 500	949
Singapore	127	168	287	87	165
Japan	545	512	602	465	805
United Arab Emirates	45	93	89	34	55
Macau (China)	1	-	-	-	-
Laos PDR	-	-	-	62	-
Other	-	-	17	10	46
Total	25 575	30 173	36 945	42 528	36 124

Note: - = nil

¹ Overseas workers were sent by 257 employment agencies.

Source: CSO Quarterly Statistics Bulletin, Q3, 2017

In the Quarterly statistics bulletin, under the section of labour and employment (chapter 7), month-wise details on the placement of overseas workers (total) and their distribution across different countries is presented. This information is provided together with a comparison of the cumulative data for the previous two years, which gives some scope for analysing trends in different migration corridors.

2.2.2 Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population

This is the key administrative department that handles all labour, employment, social security, and migration issues. Sitting under the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MOLIP), the Migration Division of the Department of Labour (DOL) is the pivotal division in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation of various measures related to labour migration. The MOLIP also collects information on migrants in Thailand and Malaysia through the issuance of temporary passports or Certificates of Identity. At the Overseas Employment Supervisory Committee, 1/2018 held on December 9th 2018, the Global New Light of Myanmar reported that the Union Minister announced that 1,099,586 undocumented Myanmar workers in Thailand had been issued with Certificates of Identity and their bio matrix data scanned, recorded and stored in the National Data Centre in Nay Pyi Taw which could be shared if other departments requested it. According to the report, the same type of data was collected for 1,265,688 other workers overseas as of December 2nd 2018.

2.2.3 Labour Exchange Offices

There are 78 Labour Exchange Offices (LEOs) offices spread across the states and regions of the country. The LEOs generally function as part of the DOL at the field level, being responsible for registering and issuing labour cards to both national and overseas jobseekers, providing employment information, factory inspections, social security, labour-related dispute resolution, registration of labour unions/organizations, and other functions.

Eleven of the LEOs currently house Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), which focus on the provision of information and support to migrants going overseas. MRCs share information related to safe migration, provide counselling, and give advice on employment and contact information to potential migrants or their families. The ILO supports MRCs in the LEOs in Mandalay, Meiktila, Kyaukse, Myingyan, and Dawei, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) supports MRCs in LEO offices in Yangon, Magway, Hpa-ann, Myawaddy, Mawlamyine, and Sittwe. Each MRC maintains a register of those who have visited the centre for services related to migration. The register contains basic information in terms of name, address, age, sex, and intended place of work (country). MRC staff noted that the number of clients is low and felt this was because people were not used to contacting government services for general information on a voluntary basis and because staff were not used to providing counselling services.⁷

According to the 1959 Employment Restriction Law, employers and workers must register at the LEO, and the LEOs should provide job matching. According to the law, this is the only method of job advertising and jobseeking, but nowadays most people use word of mouth, brokers, employment agencies, internet advertisements, newspapers, and other media formats to advertise and to find work. The 2014 Rules and Regulations to the Overseas Employment Law allows for overseas employment agencies to job match workers; although currently overseas employment agencies can only register in the Yangon area.

LEO employment registration data contains name, age, sex, place of residence, education, and information on the job sought. Upon registration at the LEO, each potential worker is given a workers card (valid for one year), which provides them with acknowledgement that they are registered with the government employment exchange and are seeking employment. Potential workers use this card to apply for jobs. Registration with an LEO does not guarantee a job, however it reflects Government recognition of the jobseekers.

According to the procedures related to deployment of overseas workers, those who are preparing to go overseas must register at the LEO as an individual seeking employment overseas. To distinguish potential migrants from those seeking employment within the country, the registrants are issued an Overseas Workers Job Seekers Card.

⁷ Personal interview, MRC at Yangon LEO, Mayangone, 26 December 2017

Sources of data and statistics on labour migration

According to LEO officials, the basic data available at the LEO on a monthly basis are as follows:

- details of the registered jobseekers who are seeking work within the country (government or private sector);
- details of the jobseekers who are seeking work outside the country;
- details of the workers whose names have been removed from the live registers; and
- details of the number of workers who received employment through the LEO during the reporting period.

The LEO shares this basic information with the union-level Director Generals' Office of the DOL on a monthly basis, and it forms the core of the employment/unemployment statistics compiled by the DOL.

LEOs use custom-made "national employment management system" data-entry software to enter this data and share it on real-time basis with the DOL.⁸ It is reported that the data is entered and uploaded on a daily basis. On average, about 30–50 workers register each day at the LEOs. For international labour migration it is compulsory to register at the LEO. A separate code is used to distinguish those seeking employment outside the country.

This data may therefore represent a first level database on regular overseas jobseekers.

As noted above, overseas employment data is published in the annual Statistical yearbook. Such data is made available for the preceding five years in a single table. The table 7 below illustrates the data published in the Myanmar statistical year book 2016. While this aggregative data shared by the CSO is significant in terms of indicating the direction of migration flows, further analysis is not possible due to paucity of data. The data are not gender-disaggregated and are therefore extremely limited in their use for policy development.

Table 7. Myanmar workers employed overseas, by destination country and fiscal year: Department of Labour statistics

Country	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16
Total	5 603	28 347	75 584	61 645	70 788	105 616
Thailand	1 658	12 827	43 099	33 172	35 820	62 380
Malaysia	2 442	12 469	28 892	23 243	29 224	35 967
Republic of Korea	666	2 348	2 931	4 366	4 220	4 870
Singapore	687	476	605	699	493	432
Qatar	-	13	29	71	-	-
UAE	138	189	20	12	2	170
Kuwait	-	18	-	-	-	-
Japan	12	7	8	63	875	1 794
Hong Kong (China)	-	-	-	19	154	1
Macau (China)	-	-	-	-	-	2

Note: - = nil

Source: CSO, 2017, Myanmar Statistical Year Book, 2016

⁸ Personal interview, LEO office, Mayangone, 26 December 2017

2.2.4 Overseas Workers Identification Card (OWIC)

To migrate regularly, workers need an Overseas Workers' Identification Card (OWIC),⁹ as well as the previously mentioned Overseas Workers Job Seekers Card. The OWIC together with the verification of the employment contract is carried out at only three designated DOL offices: the LEO at North Dagon, Yangon; the LEO at Myawaddy; and the No.2 Industrial Training School in Aung Myay Thar Zan Township, Mandalay.

The OWIC contains basic information on the worker (name, age, sex, Citizen Scrutiny Card (CSC) number, destination country, occupation), and on the backside of the card there are telephone contact details of the labour attachés of the Myanmar embassy in the destination country.

These three field locations of the DOL gather the basic data on the overseas workers that are going to be deployed on a monthly basis, and this information is shared with union-level DOL monthly through Excel spreadsheets (both soft copy and hard copy). Ideally, this information could be reconciled with the information that LEOs receive in the lists of workers whose employment contracts are processed by the Migration Division.

However, for public dissemination, the statistics on overseas workers deployed are based on the data shared by overseas employment agencies with the Department of Labour (see Table 7).

2.2.5 Temporary passports and Certificates of Identity issued by Myanmar in countries of destination

According to the MOU signed between Myanmar and Thailand in 2004¹⁰, in addition to providing legal channels for migration from Myanmar to Thailand, provisions were made to verify the nationality of Myanmar migrants already working in Thailand irregularly. The first Nationality Verifications started in 2009, and migrants were issued with a temporary passport from Myanmar. These temporary passports allowed migrants to get a two-year visa and work permit to work in Thailand, which could then be extended for a further two years. At the end of the four-year period, migrants were required to return to Myanmar for at least three years before attempting to work again in Thailand. The temporary passport has no legal standing in Myanmar law. At the time when the first group of migrants reaching the maximum period of stay (four years) in June 2013, with the prospect of 1.2 million migrants who had registered for temporary passports being unable to work in Thailand for three years, the Thai Government proposed reducing the period of time that migrants needed to be out of the country to one month and the Myanmar Government announced on return to Myanmar migrants should obtain a full passport by presenting their ID and family registration certificate with which they could re-migrate as regular workers under the MOU agreement. These arrangements are enshrined in the revised MOU of June 2016. For those migrants in Thailand whose four year period had not been completed or who were still unregistered, the Thai policy called for them all to apply for a pink card, with which they should then apply for a Certificate of identity (CI) from the Myanmar authorities. The deadline for pink card registration was set at 30 March 2018, and the deadline for CI registration the 30 June 2018.

⁹ This card is commonly referred to as the "Smart Card".

¹⁰ The MOU was revised in June 2016

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During the period of registration, Myanmar established CI centres in nine locations in Thailand,¹¹ as well as two mobile centres that serviced Myanmar workers in factories¹². These facilities were expected to issue CIs to about 9,000 workers per day. According to a MOLIP official, as of December 2017, 230,000 irregular migrants had been issued CIs, and a further 200,000 workers needed to secure this certification.¹³

The database of workers who have been provided with CI is consolidated on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis across all the centres, and is shared with the DOL. There is no further consolidation and sharing of this information in the public domain. The Myanmar Government contracted out the CI registration process to a private company. The data received from the workers are verified by the Department of Immigration, who check the address of the migrant for confirmation of citizenship, and based on the department's approval a CI would be issued.¹⁴

Malaysia has also allowed for undocumented Myanmar migrants to have their nationalities verified and be issued with a Certificate of Identity from Myanmar. The most recent registration period ended in June 2018.

The Passport Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for issuance of passports for Myanmar citizens. Details of the individual (type of passport, name, date of birth, sex, place of birth, nationality, address) are gathered, authenticated, and recorded on the passport document (Ministry of Information, 2016). Altogether nine specific types of passports are issued by the Government based on the purpose of travel. Migrant workers are required to apply for a Passport for Jobs.¹⁵ The categorization of passports is cumbersome and allows for corruption, and it also can present confusion in terms of data on migrants. However, these passports should provide a clear set of information regarding a population who are in the process of applying for jobs overseas. That said, no information is currently available in the public domain from this source.

2.2.6 Border collection

The Department of Immigration records the entry and exit of people at official border points, including the Yangon and Mandalay international airports; sea ports; and official border crossings with China (Muse, Lwejel, Kanpikete, Chinshwehaw, Kengtung), with Thailand (Tachilek, Myawaddy, Kawthaung, Myeik, Maung Taung, Htee Khee,), with Bangladesh (Sittwe, Maungdaw), and with India (Tamu, Reed). This data is not made public.

11 Two centres in Samut Sakorn, and one each in Samut Prakarn, Mae Sot, Mae Sai, Ranong, Chiang Mai, Songkla, and Nakorn Sawan.

12 Personal interview, Deputy Director-General, Migration Division, Nay Pyi Taw, 19 December 2017.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 According to the Myanmar Passport Board, the nine types of passports are PB – Business Passport; PT – Dependent Passport; PJ – Job Passport; PR – Religious Passport; PS – Seaman Passport; PE – Student Passport; PV – Visit Passport; PD – Diplomatic Passport and PO – Official Passport (Ministry of Information, 2016).

2.2.7 Other administrative sources

i. Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation (MOEAF)¹⁶

Established in 2013 as a federation of 224 agencies¹⁷, the MOEAF plays a significant role in facilitating the migration process. The agencies have to be licensed by the MOLIP and are governed by the rules and regulations issued in June 2014 to accompany the Law Relating to Overseas Employment (1999).

With technical assistance from the ILO, the MOEAF has developed a Code of Conduct to improve the standards of its members and to support ethical recruitment and responsibility throughout the migration process. As of June 2018, 183 agencies have signed the Code of Conduct, committing themselves to comply with ethical practices and to participate in a monitoring process to rank their compliance with the Code.

Until early 2016 the MOEAF had been the nodal agency for routing Thai employers' demand letters for workers. Such demand letters were forwarded to the Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Security (now MOLIP) in order to ensure processing and approval by the Government. A demand letter contains the number of workers required by a company, occupational categories, and terms and conditions of employment. According to the vice-president of MOEAF, this data was compiled for the period 2014–16. However this practice has since been abandoned due to the new rules set up by the Myanmar Government whereby each individual agency – and not the MOEAF committee – can forward demand letters directly to the Migration Division (see Box 2). Therefore the MOEAF is no longer privy to an overview of all the demand for workers from Myanmar. Approval of demand letters is granted by the Supervisory Committee on Overseas Employment, which consists of representatives from various ministries (including MOLIP and the Ministry of Home Affairs), established under the Law Relating to Overseas Employment (1999).

¹⁶ The following analysis is based on an interview with an MOEAF representative on 10 January 2018

¹⁷ Current membership is 259

**Box 2. Excerpts of the Rules and Regulations for
Overseas Employment Agencies on Data Collection**

1. In order to get the licence, an Overseas Employment Agency must provide the following documents relating to Agency Service:
 - (a) The biodata of the worker.
 - (b) The original copy of the employment contract of the worker. (Myanmar, English, and the host country language)
 - (c) The list of the workers already sent overseas with dates of departure
 - (d) Documentation of the collection of service fees from the workers.
 - (e) Payment of the income tax liabilities of the agency.
 - (f) Lists and details of workers sending remittances to families through the agency (amount, date, and bank account).
 - (g) Other information as per the directive of the Department of Labour from time to time.
2. Overseas Employment License holders must preserve documents as listed for a period of 5 years after sending workers aboard and present the same to officials as and when requested.

The MOEAF must:

 - (a) Submit workers list of those already deployed overseas on monthly basis to the Department.

License holders of Overseas Employment Agencies:

 - (a) Submit the list of workers along with documents including employment contract and passport copy of workers to the Department of Labour and the MOEAF to get approval to send workers.
 - (b) The agency has to submit the detailed information on deployed workers and their list to the Department of Labour and the Labour Exchange Offices where the workers registered for their labour cards within 48 hours of the workers leaving for abroad. Assist to return the Overseas Worker Identification Card of the workers to the Department within one week if the agency cannot send the workers overseas for some reason or [the worker] returned home after the end of the term of the contract or returned home for some reason before completing the term of contract.

Note: Unofficial translation

ii. Overseas Employment Agencies¹⁸

Licensed overseas employment agencies, which are all members of the MOEAF, play a critical role in ensuring deployment of overseas workers. The size of each agency in terms of number of workers deployed can vary considerably. The agencies representatives interviewed reported that the largest agency in Myanmar sent approximately 6,800 workers to Thailand between April 2016 and March 2017. Other agencies send workers in much smaller numbers to other countries, including Japan and Qatar. Each agency maintains their own database of potential workers who register with them. Most potential migrants come to the agencies through word-of-mouth recommendations (often by workers whom the agency has previously sent overseas) or through brokers. From this pool, agencies identify suitable candidates for the overseas employers.

Overseas employment agencies register the details of potential workers, capturing basic information (bio-data) and storing it as a printed form (filed) and also in the computer in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. The data gathered at this stage include name, age, sex, place of residence, passport details, CSC, education and skill levels, experience, preferred country or countries for deployment.

Overseas employers (or their representative) interview the workers and select them from this pool of registered workers, and then the agency initiates the process of documentation to facilitate deployment of workers. In this process, the agency would ensure that the workers receive employment contracts, OWICs, and pre-departure training. In undertaking all these processes, information on the potential workers is recorded by both the agency and the local LEO, as well as by the Migration Division of the DOL.

According to one agency, about 30–50 per cent of their migrants are semi-literate; 25 per cent finished secondary school; and 10–20 per cent finished high school. In the pre-departure health checks, about 1 per cent do not pass the mental health check, and 10–15 per cent do not pass the physical health check, mainly because of Hepatitis B, followed by tuberculosis and STDs.

Each individual agency is expected to send information on the workers deployed to the government through a structured format on a monthly basis, which is then compiled by the Migration Division of the DOL. The format consists of name, sex, age, occupation, CSC number, passport number, and host country company name and address.¹⁹

The data that the DOL compiles on a monthly basis on the number of overseas workers deployed is primarily derived from this reporting by the agencies. While the information that the agencies provide has more details related to the overseas workers, only information on the total number of workers deployed in each country is made available in the public domain through the CSO (see tables 6 and 7).

Reconciliation of data on the number of workers deployed can be undertaken by comparing the demand letter information with that of actual deployment. This is particularly important, as it provides more accurate data on the demand–supply balance and could enable more systematic planning. This exercise of matching demand with supply is being carried out by each employment agency as part of their own business plan. However there appears to be no effort to undertake this exercise at

¹⁸ The following analysis is based on an interview with an MOEAF representative on 10 January as well as interviews with two overseas employment agencies conducted on 12 January 2018.

¹⁹ Based on the format shared by the agency interviewed.

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an aggregate level (either by the agencies or by the Government). A detailed labour mobility forecast would be possible if such data were aggregated and used effectively.

Our interactions with the agencies reveal that medium- to long-term forecasts on labour deployment are carried out by each agency using the information that they gather from the human resource departments of the overseas employers they are currently serving. Some details related to replacement labour requirements, expansion plans of the employers in terms of their production capacity, and business operations are shared with the agencies. Such sharing of information occurs in an informal way and is based on the trust between the host company and the recruitment agency.

Further, some agencies keep track of the workers that they have sent abroad by contacting the human resource departments of the respective companies where they have deployed workers. This is reported to be carried out through email and other electronic communication. Workers are also given emergency contact numbers for the agency (and for their agents in the host country) to seek assistance in case of emergency.

Some agencies also attempt to track and report back to the Migration Division the details of returning workers who have completed their tenure overseas. However this practice has not been widely followed.

iii. Data on cost of recruitment

According to Article 7 of the ILO Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), private employment agencies shall not charge directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any fees or costs to workers. The Convention does allow exceptions to be made, but only in consultation with representative workers' and employers' organizations and with the provision that any exception must be reported to the ILO. Myanmar is not a signatory to C181, however all Member states should be guided by the Conventions.

In Myanmar, the Rules and Regulations accompanying the Law Relating to Overseas Employment state that recruitment fees should not be more than four times the basic monthly salary, or according to directives issued by the MOLIP. Nevertheless, overcharging is common and the majority of complaints brought to labour organizations, civil society organizations, and MOLIP's complaints mechanism relate to overcharging by recruitment agencies. The complaints mechanism records basic information about the number and type of complaints they receive, but the information is not gender-disaggregated and not detailed enough for a proper analysis. The MOLIP complaints mechanism also records the details of the agencies whose licenses have been suspended and of agencies that have been blacklisted for violations of the rules. (See Annex IV for statistics from the Complaints Mechanism). MOLIP is currently working with the ILO to develop better data collection systems for the Complaints Mechanism.

Agencies that have signed up to the MOEAF Code of Conduct are required to produce a breakdown of all costs and fees and sample receipts. In time the Code Compliance and Monitoring Committee of the Code of Conduct could collect significant data relating to recruitment costs since all agencies being monitored and ranked are required to produce evidence of the fees and costs charged to workers and employers.

2.2.8 Summary

In relation to regular migration, there appear to be multiple points at which data on migrant workers are collected by different agencies (DOL, Immigration, overseas employment agencies) throughout the process of workers' deployment; however less is collected about their return. Some rich data on the profiles of migrants are being collected. Some information is being collected multiple times but there is no cross checking of information and the information is not made public. The information may be being used for policy development internally, but the restrictions on its dissemination result in other involved stakeholders— including workers and employers – not being privy to information that might affect their decisions and input into policy-making.

2.3 Sample surveys

Data and statistics on migration are generated through various field studies and surveys conducted by the Government, often with the support from specialist agencies like the ILO, UN Development Programme, and the World Bank. They work in collaboration with relevant ministries within the Government as part of their mandate to support socio-economic development and to enhance the research and data collection capacities of the relevant ministries. The CSO provides technical guidance and quality checks for such surveys.

These are significant sources as they gather more in-depth information on migration and related issues from households. Thus they relate to various dynamic aspects of migration from a household perspective and give insights into the household conditions and factors leading to migration.

Demographic and health surveys, labour force surveys, and living standards measurement surveys are important household sample surveys carried out regularly in most countries to increase understanding of socio-economic and development impacts on the people. Where possible, questions on migration should be included in such surveys. Sample surveys can be conducted with migrants (or returned migrants) at the point of departure (or arrival) focusing on various parameters in order to understand aspects of the migration experience.

2.3.1 Labour force surveys

In 2015, the ILO supported the DOL in conducting a labour force survey with a focus on the general labour force, child labour, and the school-to-work transition. The data was collected between 1 January and 31 March 2015. This survey covered characteristics of household members, including some information on international migration. The survey report estimated the number of household members living abroad, the average duration of their time abroad, age, rural–urban and state/region distribution of migrants, their destination countries, sex disaggregation, type of occupation, and remittance details (CSO, 2016).

The Myanmar Labour Force, Child Labour and School to Work Transition Survey 2015 included questions related to persons living abroad (migrants). This information was sought from the head of the household, who was the main survey respondent. The following are the questions from the survey form that were related to migration, with potential answers provided in brackets:

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- Q20. Are there any members of this household who have left to live abroad for more than six months? [Yes/No]
- Q21. How many of those members are currently living abroad? [Number] Please give me the following information in respect of those family members. ...
- C3. What is his/her sex? [1=Male; 2=Female]
- C4. How old was he/she at last birthday? (Record the age in completed years)
- C5–6. In which year and month did he/she leave the country? [YYYY; MM]
- C7–8. In which country is he/she currently living? [Name of country and country code]
- C9. What was the main reason for going abroad? [1=In search of employment / business; 2=To take up a job; 3=Job transfer; 4=Study; 5=Marriage; 6=Family moved; 7=Health; 8=Armed conflict; 9=Other (specify)]

It should be noted that the above set of questions, while providing some data and statistics on the migrant population, does not contribute to deeper analysis like occupation patterns or the past migration history of individuals. Administering a complete migration module would provide information that could better be used for policy development.

The following information can be derived from the survey (CSO, 2016):

- profile of persons living abroad (by domains – urban, rural, all, state/regions): average age, average number of years living abroad, per cent persons living abroad for employment, number of persons sending remittance or goods for every 100 persons living abroad, average annual receipt from person living abroad (see Annex II for details);
- proportion of households having a former member living abroad (urban, rural and across different state/regions);
- percentage distribution of persons living abroad by reason; and
- percentage distribution of persons living abroad by destination country.

Box 3 below presents selected data highlights from the Labour Force, Child Labour and School to Work Transition Survey 2015.²⁰

Box 3. Migration highlights from the 2015 labour force survey

- Former household members living abroad estimated at 1.12 million in 2015 – 60 per cent male, 40 per cent female.
- National average age of persons living abroad is 26 years old.
- Main motive for migration was employment.
- 85 per cent of the migrants remit either money or goods to their former household members.
- 74.3 per cent of persons living abroad went to Thailand; 14.5 per cent to Malaysia; 2.4 per cent to Singapore.
- More people from rural areas go to Thailand and Malaysia than from urban areas. For other destination countries, more people originate from urban areas.

Source: CSO, 2016, p. xi.

²⁰ Annex II provides further details from the Labour Force Survey 2015.

2.3.2 World Bank-supported surveys

The World Bank conducts large sample surveys in collaboration with the Rural Development Department that contribute to developing trends within the overall socio economic context. According to a World Bank representative²¹, the Bank has supported three large sample surveys in the recent past that included material related to international labour migration:

1. Myanmar Poverty and Living Conditions Survey 2014/15 – A survey of 3,648 households. Section 5a included nine questions on migrant details, and section 5b included questions on remittances.
2. Myanmar Living Conditions Survey 2016/17 – A survey of 13,000 households. Section 12 is devoted to gathering information on international labour migration, and establishes the link between migration and household wellbeing. It covers migrants' previous and current occupation(s) as well as migration status (over the past 12 months), and asks whether the individual has returned or not. Further questions are asked on remittances. The relevant questions from this survey are as follows:

57. During the last 12 months, did [NAME] do any job(s) away from home, either abroad or within Myanmar, for pay or profit for more than three consecutive months? Yes/ No

58. Where was this job away from home mostly carried out?

59. How much money did [NAME] send/bring to your household from this work away from home in the last 12 months?

60. What was the main channel used for sending/bringing this money to your household?
3. Qualitative Social and Economic Monitoring Survey – A thematic survey on domestic migration in two regions, conducted in 2016. It has some relevance to international migration (World Bank, 2016).

2.3.3 Passenger surveys

In 2014, Migrant Workers' Reporting Counters were set up at Yangon International Airport's Arrival Hall and Departure Hall by the DOL. Both out-bound and in-bound Myanmar migrant workers were required to pass through the reporting counter. The purpose was to inspect the documentation of migrant workers, provide relevant information materials, and collect labour migration data in order to promote safe and legal migration practices. In 2017, a new International Terminal opened and the Migrant Workers' Reporting Counter moved there. Migrants are referred to the counter by the staff inspecting boarding passes and passports before entry into the immigration section. Migrants spend a few minutes at the Migrant Workers' Reporting Counter before moving on to the Anti-trafficking Counter. The Migrant Workers' Reporting Counter scans the worker's OWIC card, passport, and national ID card. It also checks the country of destination and the contact details of the recruitment agency. However, the process of reporting to these counters is voluntary, and migrants may be afraid to miss their planes if they are delayed at the counter or there are long queues. As a result, the counter is not able to monitor all departing migrant workers. The counter in the Arrival Hall of

²¹ Email communication from Economist (Social Protection and Jobs), World Bank Myanmar Office, on 11 January 2018.

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Terminal 1 mainly caters to migrants returning from the Republic of Korea and from Japan. Migrants returning from the Republic of Korea can claim back their deposit of 1.5 million Myanmar kyat (MMK). The information is also used to organize happy return programmes for returning workers. These programmes aim to place returning workers with Japanese or Korean owned companies based in Myanmar.

2.3.4 Migration data collected by NGOs, civil society organizations, and trade unions

There are only a few civil society organizations that work exclusively on migration issues, but there are many more that include migration in their portfolio, whether they are working on general labour issues, women's rights, child labour, youth, environment, and other issues. In Yangon, these labour organizations and civil society organizations have developed a network, the CSO and LO Network for Migrants (Myanmar) to share information on the situation of and policies related to migrants; to work together to promote safe migration and eliminate exploitative practices; and to advocate for the rights of migrant workers and their families. Some network members work mainly in Yangon while others have activities elsewhere in the country and in some cases cross-border, other members maintain contact with similar organizations in other parts of the country and in countries of destination. As such, each organization has information about migrants making complaints or sharing grievances, and has anecdotal information about patterns and trends in migration.

In developing this report, the author interviewed representatives of the CSO and LO Network for Migrants (Myanmar), including the Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar (CTUM),²² which has over 7,000 members working as international migrants, mainly in Thailand and Malaysia. Members are encouraged to affiliate with local trade unions in the destination country. The membership database of the CTUM consists of details of members in terms of their age, sex, occupation, education, CSC status, and place of residence. This database is maintained in Excel form. As a trade union, CTUM shares its membership data in aggregate numbers with the DOL for its organizational registration purposes. The local township level labour officers also have access to members' information, as it is submitted to the local LEO by the local branch of the labour organization.

2.3.5 Big data

Increasingly the utility of data aggregation and data analytics generated through big data from technology driven-interfaces has been acknowledged in policy circles. Data generated through consumer interface with technology – particularly through mobile communication, mobile money transfers, Internet-based communication (Viber, email), and social media (Facebook) – provides valuable insights and analytical interpretation in terms of the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the migrant population. Characterized as 'big data', such anonymized data is generated inadvertently and stored. It is liable to issues of infringement of privacy unless well regulated. Big data is significant due to the volume of data that can be generated and analysed; its velocity; and its variety (structured and non-structured types) (Global Migration Group).

In the Myanmar context, technology is still nascent, however mobile phone penetration is very high

²² Personal interview with Deputy Officer of the Migration Department of the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar, 9 January 2017.

and migrants use mobile devices to communicate with friends and families, listen to music, check commodity prices in relation to their work (such as the daily rubber price), get news, and find updates on job opportunities. Despite the variety of apps and websites available, migrants and most people from Myanmar use Facebook as their primary application.

Some of the private sector banks, like AGD Bank, are collaborating with mobile money transfer companies in order to provide services to customers who remit funds from abroad (Kyi, 2016). Such operations involve the gathering of data, and it may be possible to use some parts of such data (if anonymized). However, a robust set of data privacy and cyber security laws and enforcement mechanisms are first required in order to tap the potential of big data in Myanmar without risking breaches of privacy.

2.4 Data from countries of destination

2.4.1 Thailand

The Office of the Foreign Workers Administration, Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour of the Thailand provides comprehensive data related to the number of non-Thai citizens in Thailand on a monthly basis. The data includes the numbers of migrants disaggregated by a number of variables, including gender, nationality, and immigration status of the migrants; by province and town of destination; and by work sector. It also includes numbers of employers and positions. The data, which is only available in the Thai language, is the most comprehensive data that exists on Myanmar migrants in Thailand. This is particularly the case because it captures the undocumented population through data related to the regularization of undocumented migrants. These amnesty style registrations have been practiced since 1996, and so details of the numbers and trends of Myanmar migrants in Thailand can be analysed over the last 22 years; although the figures on the Foreign Workers Administration website only go back as far as 2000. Table 8 below provides the number of regular migrant workers in Thailand as of September 2018, according to the Foreign Workers Administration.

Table 8. Number of registered Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand as of September 2018

Documentation	Total		
	Woman	Man	Overall total
Nationality verification (NV)	449462	589122	1038584
MOU	157505	227506	385011
Border/seasonal	457	1125	1582
Permission to stay to 30/03/20 awaiting NV	N/A	N/A	777217
Total	607424	817753	2202394

Note: n.a. = not available

Source: Foreign Workers Administration Office, n.d.

The Thai Ministry of Public Health also provides information about the health of migrants, which is collected from the mandatory health checks that all migrants have to undertake in order to get a work

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permit. The information made public is not, however, disaggregated by nationality (Table 9).

Table 9: Outcomes of health screening at registration to the Migrant Health Insurance Scheme in Thailand, 1 April 2016 to 2 August 2016

Outcome	No. of migrants (%)
Migrant health insurance target for 2016	3 400 787 (100.0)
Applied for registration and health screening (4 months in 2016)	1 147 889 (33.8)
Screened and enrolled into migrant health insurance	1 146 979 (33.7)
No treatment needed	1 138 066
Treated for infectious diseases	8 913
Pulmonary tuberculosis	4 929
Syphilis	1 913
Lymphatic filariasis	50
Leprosy	5
Other (e.g., helminthiasis, anaemia, malnourishment)	2 016
Screened and found not fit for work: Returned back to country of origin due to substance abuse, alcoholism, syphilis (stage 3), symptomatic leprosy, or lymphatic filariasis.	910 (0.1)

Source: Health Insurance Group, Ministry of Public Health, as cited in Tangcharoensathien, Thwin, and Patcharanarumol, 2017.

All children of migrants are eligible for full immunization coverage, and in 2015 the programme reported reaching 50,000 dependents of migrants (regardless of their parents' immigration status). The Office of Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education, has information on the children of migrants in Thai schools, but in the statistics made publically available, children attending school are counted by age and gender only, and not by ethnicity or nationality, which can also be construed as a good non-discriminatory practice.

Information is also available and shared from Thailand regarding victims of trafficking. The Bilateral Standard Operating Procedures between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Thailand on Management of Cases and the Repatriation and Re/Integration of Victims of Trafficking, 2013, provides procedures for the collection and sharing of "basic victim data". This information could be useful for the MOLIP in terms of taking action against overseas employment agencies. In terms of profiling victims or identifying hot spot areas, the number of trafficking victims being assisted or bringing cases for prosecution is currently too small to feed into policy interventions.

Case interview reports for trafficking include the following details:

- Workplace categories: The following are specified: sex work, massage parlour (no sex), restaurant, factory, begging, street seller, fishery, market stall, agriculture, shop, forced marriage, domestic worker.
- Questions about their circumstances: How did they leave Myanmar? Who did they travel with? What happened?

- Trafficking circumstances: workplace; sold or abducted; deceived on type of work or conditions of work or wages; stayed voluntarily or confined; physically abused/physically forced; sexually abused; threatened.
- List of questions about money sent home, indebtedness.
- Reintegration monitoring includes: occupation, education, migration, marriage, and return to Thailand.

2.4.2 Malaysia

Data on migrant workers in Malaysia is collected by the Foreign Workers Management Division under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Malaysia. In 2011, the Ministry allowed irregular migrants in Malaysia to register for work without penalty under an amnesty programme commonly known as the 6P programme. Under this programme, migrants were biometrically registered and could apply for work permits. According to news reports, 120,000 Myanmar migrants had registered by December 2011, rising to 379,000 by February 2012. Ministry of Home Affairs statistics from 2017 reported 121,050 Myanmar migrants (20,379 women and 100,671 men) being in the country (ILO, 2017). NGOs, on the other hand, have put the number much higher, closer to 500,000 (Allchin, 2011). Such data is used for updating Malaysia population statistics. Similarly labour force surveys and migration survey reports also provides statistics on in-migrants to Malaysia. The Department of Statistics (2017) provides on its website aggregate data on foreign workers (based on labour force surveys), which is the main source of information in the public domain. It is estimated that 11.3 per cent of total population of Malaysia are migrants.

2.4.3 Singapore

In Singapore, the Manpower Research and Statistics Department of the Ministry of Manpower provides information on the number and types of occupation of foreign workers. There appears to be no disaggregation in terms of gender or country of origin. However, information requests can be made through a government website to access additional information (Data.gov.sg, 2018). The same data is also accesible through the Department of Statistics.²³

The Singapore labour force survey for mid-2017 shows the total labour force to be 3,657,000, of which 2,269,700 are residents (Ministry of Manpower, 2018). Although the information is public, is well presented, and is regularly updated, there is no detailed information relating to the foreign labour force, despite some details being collected (see Box 4 below).

Given the paucity of official data, it is difficult to estimate the number of workers from Myanmar in Singapore. There are only estimates reported in news outlets. The Irrawaddy (Zue, 2017) reported a speech of a MOLIP official in which the official stated that approximately 40,000 domestic workers in Singapore are from Myanmar, despite there being a ban on domestic workers migrating overseas. According to another media account, many of these Myanmar domestic workers are below the age of 23, Singapore's minimum age requirement (Gooch, 2017). According to an article published by the Migration Policy Institute, the Myanmar Ambassador to Singapore estimated that Myanmar domestic workers make up one-third of all Myanmar migrant workers in Singapore. Apart from domestic work, workers are concentrated in the construction and marine sectors (shipping, shipyards,

²³ See <https://www.singstat.gov.sg/statistics>.

Sources of data and statistics on labour migration

and maintenance) (Ma, 2017) and tourism and hospitality.

The Manpower Research and Statistics Department of the Ministry of Manpower conducts regular national surveys on employment, the labour market, and the labour force, which the population can complete online. The information helps the Government to shape manpower policies and programmes, and also facilitates employers, workers, and jobseekers to make informed plans and decisions.

Box 4. Foreign workers in Singapore, according to the Ministry of Manpower

Foreign workers in Singapore

- December 2016:
 - Foreign workers consist of approximately 38 per cent of Singapore's ~3,673,100 strong workforce.
 - There are about 252,900 foreign workers in Singapore's manufacturing sector, approximately 51 per cent of the total force of ~498,400.
 - There are about 365,400 foreign workers in Singapore's construction sector, approximately 75 per cent of the total force of ~488,500.
 - There are about 769,900 foreign workers in Singapore's services industry, approximately 29 per cent of the total force of ~2,659,400.

Foreign domestic workers (FDWs) in Singapore

- Over the last 10 years, the number of FDWs in Singapore has increased by about 40 per cent to over 240,000 in 2017.
- FDWs account for 18 per cent of total migrants workers in Singapore (2017)
- FDWs:
 - caregiving needs: young children, elderly persons, people with disabilities
 - from households without caregiving needs and with multiple FDWs.
- Top three countries: Myanmar, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

Source: Ministry of Manpower website data [Accessed 16 June 2018].

2.4.4 Republic of Korea

In the Republic of Korea, the Employment Permit System (EPS) has been implemented since 2004 to fill the shortage of non-professional workers with replacement foreign workers. The process involves coordination by various departments of the Government of the Republic of Korea, such as the Human Resource Development Service, responsible for the Korean language test; the Ministry of Employment and Labour for employment permits; and the Ministry of Justice for visa issuance and entry. While all these agencies collect data on foreign workers, it is not shared publicly on their websites. However, according to MOLIP, as of January 2018, a total of 34,183 Myanmar workers have migrated through the EPS system to the Republic of Korea.

Migration statistics in the Republic of Korea are reported as part of "International Migration Statistics".²⁴ Annual reports have been published since 2011, and these show aggregate numbers of migrants from different countries (with data provided for the top five countries of origin). "Vital Statistics of Immigrants 2016"²⁵ is another source, which shows mainly demographic characteristics of migrant

²⁴ For more see: <http://kostat.go.kr/portal/eng/pressReleases/8/5/index.board>

²⁵ For more see: <http://kostat.go.kr/portal/eng/pressReleases/8/1/index.board>

workers in the Republic of Korea. The Survey on Immigrant's Living Condition and Labour Force (2017) conducted by the national statistical agency – Statistics Korea – presents data on employment, wage and salary, education, money wiring, and continuation of stay of overall immigrants. A Statistics Korea (2017) factsheet on the survey results briefly provides percentages by nationality of “foreigners of non-professional employment”. However the report only covers the top five countries – Viet Nam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, and the Philippines. Myanmar is not covered because of its low level of representation in the overall migrant workforce.

2.4.5 Japan

According to an expert in the migration of care workers field, Professor Wako Akito, 270,000 migrants are in Japan through the Technical Intern and Training Program. The largest numbers are from Viet Nam (104,800), China (79,959), the Philippines (25,740), Indonesia (20,374), Thailand (7,898), Cambodia (5,704), Myanmar (5,019), Mongolia (900), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (422), Sri Lanka (328), and Nepal (200).²⁶ The programme is meant to provide skills to workers from developing countries so they can return to their countries with better employment opportunities. The programme has, however, been challenged as being an excuse for bringing in migrant workers for less pay and without full protection as workers.

In June 2018, the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, chaired by the Japanese Prime Minister, adopted a set of immigration policies that included the creation of a new visa status: the designated skills visa. This visa is for non-professional foreign labourers, and Japan would be seeking 500,000 new workers under this visa by 2025 in agriculture, construction, hotels, nursing, and shipbuilding. Migrants coming under this visa will have to pass a Japanese language exam and are not allowed to bring their families.

The number of agencies in Myanmar licensed to send workers to Japan has grown rapidly. Today nearly half of all Myanmar agencies are involved in recruitment to Japan for both the trainee and the new designated skills visa categories. Only agencies that have signed the MOEAF Code of Conduct are allowed to deploy workers to Japan, thus offering a good opportunity for the MOLIP, ILO, and MOEAF to ensure that recruitment agencies provide the data required under the Code and thus allow for analysis of migration from Myanmar to Japan.

2.5 International databases on migration

2.5.1 International Labour Migration Statistics Database in ASEAN

The International Labour Migration Statistics Database in ASEAN (ILMS) gathers official government data from a number of statistical sources on international migrant worker stocks and flows within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, as well as on countries' nationals living or working abroad. The ILMS enables the gathering and sharing of comparable data from ASEAN countries in order to develop policies that are relevant for the contexts of both countries of origin and countries of destination. The database uses official country sources, including population census, labour force surveys, and other official administrative data. With reference to international labour

²⁶ Presentation by Professor Wako Akito, Kyoto University, at the Mekong Migration Network Roles of Country of Origin Consultation, Chiang Mai, June 2018.

Sources of data and statistics on labour migration

migration, 19 comparable tables have been developed through this project that captures migration stocks and flows and nationals living abroad. ILOSTAT hosts this comparable data. A comprehensive report on the data and statistical information related to migration in ASEAN countries has been published by this project, which provides significant insights into data gaps (ILO, 2015b). In doing so it fills an important knowledge gap, creating a powerful research tool through which policy-makers and others can profile and monitor the international migrant labour force within the region.

The ILMS was created by the ILO's project on Tripartite Action for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers in the ASEAN Region (TRIANGLE in ASEAN), which is funded by the Canadian Government. It was developed through extensive collaboration with ASEAN Member States, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the ILO. In 2018, ILMS will become a global tool for the collection of data on labour migration.

Given that the collection and dissemination of migration statistics in Myanmar is still in its nascent stage, there is very little Myanmar information available on the ILMS. There is data available for 2014, which shows the number of Myanmar persons living abroad by destination country, with the overall totals being gender-disaggregated (Table 10).

Table 10: Stock of Myanmar nationals abroad, according to the ILMS

Country	Men	Women	Total
Malaysia	-	-	303996
Singapore	-	-	79659
Thailand	-	-	1418472
China	-	-	92263
India	-	-	17975
Japan	-	-	7593
Republic of Korea	-	-	14592
United States	-	-	37577
Other countries	-	-	49779
Total	1 233168	788742	2021910

Note: - = not provided

Source: ILMS Database in ASEAN, Table 13.

2.5.2 Database on Immigrants in OECD and Non-OECD Countries

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) captures international migration data in its Database on Immigrants in OECD and Non-OECD Countries (DIOC-E). The data contained in the DIOC-E is from the population censuses of countries of destination. The latest data available, which is based on 2010 census operations, includes data from some of the major destination countries for Myanmar migrants, including Thailand, Malaysia, Australia, and the United States. Table 11 presents an extract of data on people of Myanmar origin in different countries as per the DIOC-E.

Table 11. People of Myanmar origin living in select destination countries, based on 2010 destination country census data

Destination country	Number of workers
Thailand	1382647
United States	70143
Malaysia	36274
Australia	20461
Canada	7770
Japan	4556
New Zealand	1896

Source: OECD, 2018 (DIOC-E Tables)

The DIOC-E datasets include information on demographic characteristics (such as age and gender), labour force status, occupations, sectors of activity), educational attainment, and country of birth.

2.5.3 World Bank Remittance Database

The annual Migration and remittances fact book (KNOMAD, 2016) compiles data supplied by the central banks of member countries and provides details of remittance estimates, which are reported through formal channels.

According to this source, Myanmar falls within the top 20 emigration countries in the world in terms of total migrant stock abroad, with the Myanmar–Thailand corridor being the 16th largest migration corridor in the world. Remittances were equivalent to about 4.8 per cent of GDP in the year 2014 (KNOMAD, 2016).

According to 2018 data on the inflow of remittances, Myanmar received US\$723 million in remittances in 2017, up from \$628 million in 2016. It is a substantial year on year increase; though according to the data, Bangladesh receives remittances in excess of this amount in a single month (World Bank, 2018). The disparity may lie in the fact that the majority of Myanmar migrants continue to remit money through the informal hundi system due to the limitations of the formal financial services available and the efficiency and convenience of the hundi system.

2.5.4 UNDESA Population Division – International Migration Report

This annual report compiles data on migration from UN member countries and provides a synthesis in terms of past trends and forecasts estimates of labour migration. The report is based on various sources, including population censuses, labour force surveys, and other migration information shared by countries with the UN system.

The 2017 report, titled International migration report 2017: Highlights, presents an analysis of global and regional trends, and the specificities of migration patterns observed across regions since 2010. With specific reference to Myanmar, the report provides figures on the number of migrants, number of female migrants, and the median age of migrants (Table 12).

Table 12. Migration from Myanmar, according to UNDESA

	2010	2017
Number of international migrants (in 000s)	98	75
International migrants as % of population	0.2	0.1
Females among international migrants (%)	46.8	45.2
Median age of international migrant (years)	31.7	36.9

Source: UNDESA, Population Division, 2017.

2.5.5 Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD)

KNOMAD is a global hub of knowledge and policy expertise on migration and development.

KNOMAD aims to generate a menu of policy choices, based on analytical evidence, evaluation of policies, data collection, and quality control through peer-review. It provides technical assistance and undertakes pilot projects. KNOMAD produces materials on:

- data on migration and demographic changes;
- labour migration;
- integration issues in host communities;
- policy and institutional coherence;
- migration, security and development;
- migrant rights and social aspect of migration;
- remittances, including access to finance and capital markets;
- mobilizing diaspora resources as agents of social and economic change;
- environmental change and migration;
- internal migration and urbanization; and
- forced migration; and development.

2.5.6 United National Capital Market Development Fund

The United Nations Capital Market Development Fund (UNCDF) through partnerships with technology companies (telecommunication) and banking sectors aims to ensure safe and secure transfer of remittances. Financial agencies, particularly banks, collect “Know-Your-Customer” (KYC) data (including among migrant households), and analysis of such data could contribute to greater understanding of the household characteristics of migrants and their remittance patterns and preferences.

3. Recommendations

There is a need for reliable, disaggregated data by sex, age and migratory status and for internationally comparable indicators to support evidence - based policymaking. This will require investment in collection and analysis by Member States, in line with existing global guidelines on migration statistics, which the United Nations can support. Countries should include migration -relevant questions in population censuses, including not only y questions of country of birth or citizenship but also dates or years of arrival and motivation to move. This would allow for an estimation of recent movements and the drivers of migration (United Nations, 2017).

3.1 Standard definition and concepts

A whole of government approach to data collection would involve adopting standard definitions and concepts for labour migration. This would allow for comparisons of data between ministries and for the formulation of coherent policies.

In addition, agreeing on definitions between countries of origin and destination will facilitate policy development, including MOUs on issues needing comparable information: for example, the portability of social security; education of children of migrant workers; birth and death certifications; as well as analysing trends and outcomes of migration.

3.2 Improved capacity

Improve the capacity of CSO to collect and analyse labour migration statistics. This will enable the CSO to better fulfil its training and capacity-building mandate for the statistics divisions of line departments, and support the CSO's responsibility for quality control and providing technical advice for large-scale surveys.

The Research and Training Division and the Migration Division of the DOL, can harness the support of technical agencies, including the ILO, IOM, World Bank, and research institutes, to strengthen their capacities in analysis of data and information in order to prepare analytical policy-oriented papers on migration.²⁷

3.3 Improved systems

There is a need for the development of an integrated migration data management system wherein the interoperability of data and its portability are ensured. The integration of data gathered by various agencies needs to be ensured through appropriate MOUs across the relevant departments. Fully automated systems of data collection would reduce human errors and also ensure easy access and analysis. Financial and human resources would need to be planned to implement.

Introducing a well-designed statistical database that includes a unique identification number (e.g., passport or CI number, OWIC number, social security number) for administrative records will allow the national statistical system to accurately estimate the number of migrants by compiling computer

²⁷ The Second NPA (2018–2022) also identifies assessment of the capacities of the research and capacity-building division of DOL as part of the action plan under "improving the governance and administration of labour migration".

Recommendations

records of one person who has migrated into or out of a country (potentially on multiple occasions). After the data is electronically stored, regardless of the particular storage software that is used, it is possible to set up a programming function that will bring up data on particular questions. This enables automatic production of reports and can generally be done by trained IT officials with most types of software or programmes used for collection of data. Though different software packages can vary significantly in terms of how sophisticated they are.

A database with unique identification could be electronically linked to all the pre departure processes as well as to track the welfare of each migrant while in the destination country and upon their return. This would include linking the system to the Nationality Verification process²⁸.

3.4 Coordination and cooperation

Encourage harmonization of data collection systems to ensure comparability.

Review the Central Statistical Authority Act to give the CSO the official mandate as the national statistical coordinator and establish national statistical systems for the country. This would ensure clear coordinating mechanisms, roles and responsibilities, establishment of standards and quality assurance, and clear definitions for official statistics.

Legislation also needs to develop clear internal data protection procedures that will allow each institution to classify and categorize data according to how accessible it should be and at what intervals it should be shared with the CSO. Such classifications could include: confidential, requiring authorization, publicly available.

Classification and data sharing may be agreed upon through a formal MOU negotiated between agency heads covering the conditions under which the data can be used; the obligations of the statistical agency; the frequency at which the data will be supplied; and the agreed level of detail of the supplied data.

As a nodal agency, the CSO is responsible as repository of government data and statistics. The National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) has identified it as the authority for statistical information and it supports all line departments. It is in this context the cluster groups formed by the CSO for data collection are important in advising the data collection processes as well as analysis.²⁹ Given the importance and size of migration data, it might be advisable to develop a separate cluster/ working group comprising labour, employment, and migration, instead of combining it with the social and vital statistics.

Establish a clear channel of communication between the data users (policy-makers) and the data producers (including the CSO). Form a labour migration policy group involving a broad group of labour migration stakeholders, including representation from the CSO, and with both technical and policy expertise.

The mandate of the labour migration policy group could include:

²⁸ It can link back-end processes (demand letters, LEO, OWIC, pre-departure training, health check-up, verification of letter of appointment process, etc) and front-end processes (departure, complaint and grievance redressal in the destination country, return migration) in order complete the migration process.

²⁹ Currently, the six NSDS Clusters are the following: National Account and Statistics; Survey Coordination and Statistical Standards; Social and Vital Statistics; Agricultural and Rural Statistics; Energy and Environment Statistics; and Trade and Investment Sector Statistics.

- providing clear guidance on the statistics necessary for policy-making on migration and the underlying data that would be required for the production of statistics;
- coordinating and harmonizing the collection of labour migration data between government departments (administrative data) and the CSO;
- coordinating policy analysis of data and statistics; and
- developing a monitoring framework for policies related to labour migration in order to assess the relevance and efficacy of particular policy interventions.

Improve cooperation among different stakeholders, including public services, statistical offices, national human rights institutions, academia, and civil society organizations. As identified throughout this paper, there is an urgent need for coordination among the various entities that collect data at multiple points, as well as a need to harmonize the data and streamline the system. This should include systems that horizontally communicate, and then consolidate and share information vertically. The MOLIP could develop an all-encompassing designated database on migration.

The CSO as a nodal agency needs to take the coordination role in terms of data aggregation, analysis, and report sharing. It is in this context that there is a need to review the current level of information disclosure and develop a comprehensive user feedback mechanism so that appropriate administrative data on international labour migration can be sought from the DOL to be made available to the public.

The CSO identifies horizontal coordination with ministries and departments as a challenge. Given this context, inter-departmental data acquisition and dissemination protocols may be developed so that appropriate, adequate, and timely data can be gathered.

3.5 Accessibility and dissemination

Enhancing the level of dissemination of data directly from the source and through the CSO is critical to increase the level of information in the public domain; to allow for greater debate and academic involvement; and to encourage informed public participation in policy development. All data made public must be anonymized and unidentifiable.

3.6 Mainstreaming labour migration

Data can be collected by the inclusion of questions about migration in local statistical and data systems, including censuses, household surveys, labour force surveys, and other surveys with the Ministry of Rural Development. Such a designated database can then inform the development of national policies, which may otherwise appear unrelated to migration (for example, the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan or the National Social and Economic Plan, Poverty Reduction etc.).

The proposed inter-census survey or migration survey that is being planned by the Population Department (to be conducted in 2019) can be one opportunity to explore this further. The Population Department may seek technical support to strengthen the questionnaire.

As a quality control and data dissemination organization, the CSO needs to develop systematic

Recommendations

planning on data requirements for policy-making. It needs to ensure to incorporate migration variables in all its socio-economic surveys in order to gather information with regular frequency.

3.7 Ethical collection of data

Ensure that international rules on data protection and the right to privacy are respected in the collection, storage, use, and dissemination of such data, and that effective firewalls are put in place between public services and immigration authorities to protect migrants from immigration enforcement on the basis on such data.

A process of depersonalizing data (for example, data from border control by the Immigration Department) should be followed to ensure the privacy and security of individuals. This requires the development of appropriate policies, protocols, and coordination among various departments that collect the information on various parameters from migrant workers.

Information technology and regulatory mechanisms should be established in order to ensure interoperability, as well as the safety and security of databases.

3.8 Participation

Participation of migrant populations and their support groups in the design of surveys and other data collection instruments, as well as in the dissemination and analysis of data, will improve the relevance and quality of the statistics.

3.9 Data collection opportunities

State and region level: Supporting the development of more data collection and analysis at the state and region level would encourage tailor-made policies appropriate to the local circumstances.

Embassies could set up simple procedures for all migrants (regardless of immigration status) to register themselves and to register births and deaths at the embassy. A standard data base of these registrations can be collated from all embassies. A report of the activities of the Myanmar embassy in Egypt provides a good example of this:

The Myanmar Embassy in Egypt asked for Myanmar migrants in Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, and Ethiopia to provide their contact information to the embassy in order to ensure quick contacting and effective management in implementing, promoting, and protecting the rights of migrant workers. It also request migrants to inform the embassy of their return to Myanmar, via phone or email, at least one week prior to departure³⁰

Multi-sectoral sharing of information: Labour organizations and civil society groups can collate and share anonymized information on migrants who bring them complaints and grievances to add these instances to the MOLIP and MOEAF data base.

³⁰ Source: <http://www.mecairo.org/en/citizen-registration.html>

3.10 Big data

Financial services agencies (banks and money transfer agencies) as well as private sector telecom players are increasingly engaging with international labour migration by providing remittances services and transactions, including mobile banking. Such enterprises need to be encouraged to share data at certain levels of aggregation, always with due respect to privacy and client confidentiality.

Online recruitment is an increasing trend. Overseas recruitment agencies will want to develop their capacity to maintain effective in-house databases for job recruitment, but as the labour migration scene changes, with more countries expecting more skills (language, educational background), the MOEAF may want to consider setting up a national data base, which in turn can provide statistics on the demand side of migration. Box 5 provides a brief summary of the types of data that need to be collected through the parties suggested in recommendations 3.9 and 3.10.

Box 5. Snapshot: What type of data is needed?

- Statistical information is needed on labour migrants' characteristics over time: Demographic and socio-economic characteristics;
- Share of labour migrants in the total workforce;
- Occupations and skills;
- Economic sectors;
- Status in employment;
- Working conditions (working hours, wages, resting period, and other contractual conditions etc.);
- Social security coverage;
- Emerging changes in existing and new flows;
- Causes of labour migration;
- Contribution to/impact of labour migration on sending and receiving countries (labour markets, remittances, share of GDP, job creation, poverty reduction, human development etc.);
- Remittances; and
- All information needs to be disaggregated by gender, age, work sector language, migration status, and where appropriate religion, ethnicity.

Source: Compiled by author.

3.11 Improving data collection on health of migrants

- Identify and promote key standardized indicators on migrant health that are acceptable and usable across countries.
- Promote the inclusion of migration variables in existing censuses, national statistics, targeted health surveys, and routine health information systems, as well as in statistics from sectors such as housing, education, labour, and immigration.
- Use anonymized data collected from migrants medical examinations to develop national policies for prevention and treatment of diseases and for improving migrants' well-being.

Recommendations

- Set up systems that can monitor migrants' health upon return to ensure long-term occupational diseases are being detected and remedies sought, including eliminating the dangers from the jobs in the future.

3.12 Improving data collection on the cost of remittances

Authorities should strengthen efforts to monitor the cost of receiving remittances; request appropriate transparency from remittance service providers; and establish effective tools to monitor the market. The creation of a consumer remittance price database is an effective means to provide consumers with comparative information on prices and other service features of specific remittance providers. If developed and presented appropriately, with detailed and comparable information on the cost of remitting money by various service providers, the database can enable remitters to compare how much their beneficiaries will receive, while enhancing transparency in the remittance market.

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The ILO is supporting development of the SaverAsia website to enable migrant workers to compare remittance costs to find best rates and money saving options. The portal also helps migrant workers to find financial services – such as savings, payments, credit, insurance products – suited for their needs. The first SaverAsia testing took place in Singapore with Indonesian and Filipino migrant domestic workers on 24 June.

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3.13 Improving data on the impact of remittances at the household level

Getting the most from migration and remittances will require better data on household-level impacts. Expanded surveys using consistent instruments will be essential. Where they have been implemented effectively and consistently, surveys have generated extensive data and strong evidence for the generally positive impacts of migration on various indicators of the well-being of migrant-sending households. These data have then been used by policy-makers to design policy interventions, like boosting pre-departure training and the establishment of bank accounts to enable lower-cost sending of remittances. Implementing surveys among migrants would also help expand the evidence base for improved policy. Finally, household surveys also play an important role in estimating personal transfers, a core element of remittance data.

Core items to be included in migration modules for surveys include:

- i. Individual level: remittances sent, recipients, country of origin, cash or kind, duration of residence of the senders, frequency and amounts, channels for transfers and uses for remittances.
- ii. Household level: receipts in the last 12 months, relationship of sender to the household head, cash or kind, frequency and amounts, channels for transfer, uses for remittances and whether household is a sender (transfers made to other countries).

3.14 Improving data on irregular migrants

Data collection on irregular migration is often limited to data from immigration and other law enforcers, accounting only for migrants who have been arrested, are in immigration detention centres, or have been deported. These data are rarely indicative of the total irregular migrant population and do not provide any analysis of their human rights circumstances. Innovative ways are required to improve data collection on irregular migration, Box 6 provides some such examples.

Box 6. Examples of data collection on irregular migration

The Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mx) is an innovative, low cost approach to collect and analyze mixed migration movements in specific migration corridors between countries in the Horn of Africa and from Africa to Europe. Data is collected through a network of 30 locally-recruited monitors in strategic migration hubs who track people on the move from the countries of origin. The monitors are in public and private sectors; and their key advantage is their knowledge of the locality and having contacts directly with people who move or who move people or close friends or associates. The monitors use custom designed mobile phone applications to collect and submit real time data and because it is centralized the questionnaires can be changed any time by 4Mx and distributed simultaneously to all monitors. The data is published in Monthly Summaries and Quarterly Trend Analysis reports. As with all information on irregular migration it provides only a part of the picture but one that is frequently missing from the information collected in countries of destination. In the first phase, the monitories interviewed 3,784 migrants, 153 smugglers, 289 observers. <http://4mi.regionalmms.org/4mi.html>

Footprints Database is a unique platform for analysing and visualizing information on mixed migration to, through and from North Africa. The platform brings together data from a range of key global sources into one central hub, allowing users to find information on migration flows, asylum claims, deaths, rescues, resettlement, returns and more. Footprints Database offers users sophisticated custom visualization tools, which can be used to represent data on maps, graphs and tables. These visualizations can be dynamically embedded in other websites, exported as images for inclusion in reports, or saved as a dynamically updating query. The platform also allows users to design and conduct surveys, or input other relevant migration related data for analysis and visualization. The user has full control over data inputted and controls the permission/privacy levels of their data to be shared with the public, colleagues, or limit to private use. Footprints also hosts unique field survey data collected by focal points stationed along key migratory routes in the region. Migrant Footprints is a project of the North African Mixed Migration Hub, an interagency research initiative based in Cairo. <https://footprintsdatabase.info/>

The Continuous Reporting System on International Migration in the Americas (SICREMI) aims to contribute to the monitoring of international migration movements in the region through rigorous and up to date information on migration flows. It also covers the principal policies and programmes of the governments of origin and destination. The fourth report, launched on 18 December 2017, has been developed by the Organization of American States in collaboration with the OECD. <http://www.oecd.org/migration/sicremi.htm>

3.15 Improving data collection on education of migrant children

The UN Committee on Migrant Workers, which monitors implementation of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, has expressed concern at the lack of data related to migrant children, such as on rates of school enrolment.

In addition, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has noted that lack of data on children in the context of migration hinders the design, implementation, and monitoring of public policies that protect migrant children's economic and social rights. In relation to migrants in an irregular situation, the committee has recommended that addressing the absence of national figures and estimates on irregular migrants, particularly irregular migrant children, should be made a higher priority by all pertinent duty-bearers, including with regards to:

- strengthening disaggregated data collection, which includes safeguards preventing the abuse of such data;
- ensuring that households affected by migration are identified in local statistical and data systems, as well as nationally-representative living standards, expenditure, and labour force surveys; and
- ensuring that the responsibility for monitoring the situation of migrant children be shared by all countries involved, including transition and destination countries in addition to origin countries.

3.16 Coordinate with countries of destination to gather data on nationals working abroad

Coordinate with authorities such as Immigration and departments of Employment, Health, and Education for data on nationals working abroad. Where possible, for example through ASEAN, adopt standardized tables on immigration stocks and flows that can be disaggregated by country of birth and/or country of citizenship. Data can also be disseminated through such sources as the ILO's International Labour Migration Statistics Database in ASEAN (ILMS).

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Annexes

Annex I. List of individuals and institutions consulted for this study

Date	Person(s) interviewed	Location
19 Dec 2017	Central Statistical Organization, Ministry of Finance and Planning – Deputy Director-General and team	Nay Pyi Taw
22 Dec 2017	Migration Division, Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population – Deputy Director-General and team	Nay Pyi Taw
22 Dec 2017	Union Election Commission members	Nay Pyi Taw
22 Dec 2017	Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population – Director-General	Nay Pyi Taw
26 Dec 2017	Skill Training Centre, Yankin	Yangon
26 Dec 2017	Labour Exchange Office – OWIC/pre departure training office, North Dagon	Yangon
26 Dec 2017	Labour Exchange Office, Mayangone	Yangon
26 Dec 2017	PEPA, Korea Employment Facilitation office (DOL)	Yangon
26 Dec 2017	Migrant Resource Centre, Mayangone	Yangon
9 Jan 2017	Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar – Deputy Officer of the Migration Department.	Yangon
10 Jan 2017	Migrant Workers Rights Network	Yangon
10 Jan 2017	Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation, Vice President	Yangon
12 Jan 2017	Private employment agency – Director	Yangon
11 Jan 2017	United Nations Capital Development Fund – Myanmar Country Coordinator	Yangon

Annex II. Labour Force Survey 2015, Table 80

Table 80. Some features of persons living abroad

Domain	Average age while leaving country (years)	Average no. of years living abroad	Percentage of persons living abroad for employment	No. of persons sending money or goods per 100 persons living abroad	Average annual receipt from per person living abroad (000 Ks)
All-Myanmar	25.5	3.8	97.9	85.1	8 669.4
Area type					
Urban	27.1	4.3	96.6	81.4	43 329.4
Rural	25.2	3.7	98.2	85.8	2 159.3
State/region					
Kachin	23.6	4.2	89.8	65.7	628.0
Kayah	26.2	3.1	97.6	92.8	1 160.3
Kayin	24.7	5.3	97.0	90.9	917.3
Chin	22.3	6.1	90.0	86.3	949.4
Sagaing	25.3	3.0	98.3	83.2	3 231.8
Tanintharyi	27.0	2.8	99.8	79.6	615.6
Bago	25.3	2.9	99.5	92.2	17 678.0
Magway	26.1	2.4	97.9	90.4	9 818.2
Mandalay	24.2	3.7	98.9	94.9	1 980.6
Mon	26.5	3.0	99.0	76.3	765.8
Rakhine	26.4	4.0	99.8	83.7	2 491.4
Yangon	27.6	5.2	100.0	92.1	126 745.0
Shan	22.3	3.5	95.8	95.9	869.7
Ayeyawady	25.9	3.3	95.7	56.4	66 462.3
NPT	28.6	3.1	98.9	90.4	2 113.0

Source: CSO, 2016

Annex III. Statistics from Migrant Workers' Reporting Counters

The list of persons (returnee migrant workers) who returned from Malaysia holding Certificates of Identity and who reported to the Migrant Worker's Reporting Counter at the Arrivals Hall at Yangon International Airport (from January 2016 to July 2018)

No.	Month/Period	Returnees with Certificate of Identity						Total		
		Malaysia			Malaysia (Children)					
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1.	1-1-2016 – 31-12-2016	10 322	2 300	12 622	267	254	521	10 589	2 554	13 143
2.	1-1-2017 – 31-12-2017	11 166	3 038	14 204	432	372	804	11 598	3 410	15 008
3.	1-1-2018 – 31-1-2018	299	63	362	10	11	21	309	74	383
4.	1-2-2018 – 28-2-2018	373	108	481	19	18	37	392	126	518
5.	1-3-2018 – 31-3-2018	334	121	455	29	24	53	363	145	508
6.	1-4-2018 – 30-4-2018	273	87	360	19	23	42	292	110	402
7.	1-5-2018 – 31-5-2018	542	136	678	37	34	71	579	170	749
8.	1-6-2018 – 30-6-2018	493	156	649	28	21	49	521	177	698
9.	1-7-2018 – 31-7-2018	629	172	801	49	14	63	678	186	864
Total		24 431	6 181	30 612	890	771	1 661	25 321	6 952	32 273

Source: Information supplied by letter from the Department of Labour, MOLIP, 31 August 2018

The list of persons departing from Myanmar who reported at the Migrant Worker's Reporting Counter at the departure hall in Yangon International Airport (from 20-7-2014 to 31-7-2018)

No.	Country	20-7-2014 – 30-6-2018			1-7-2018 – 31-7-2018			Total		
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1	Republic of Korea	21 341	0	21341	454	0	454	21 797	0	21 797
2	Hong Kong (China)	1	90	91	0	0	0	1	90	91
3	Japan	3 643	5130	8773	167	183	350	3 810	5 313	9 123
4	Qatar	224	82	306	3	3	6	227	85	312
5	Malaysia	77 811	12835	90646	1 349	442	1 791	79 160	13 277	92 437
6	Singapore	6 268	19065	25333	275	496	771	6 543	19 561	26 104
7	Thailand	82	72	154	3	4	7	85	76	161
8	Macau (China)	19	20	39	0	0	0	19	20	39
9	UAE	389	294	683	6	8	14	395	302	697
10	Malawi	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
11	Bahrain	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
12	Brunei	22	2	24	0	0	0	22	2	24
13	Papua New Guinea	6	1	7	1	0	1	7	1	8
14	Australia	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	3
15	Lao PDR	72	0	72	0	0	0	72	0	72
16	USA	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
17	Maldives	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2
18	Cambodia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
19	Jordan	16	255	271	0	22	22	16	277	293
20	Mongolia	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
21	Jamaica	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
22	Kuwait	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total		109 901	37 851	147 752	2 259	1 159	3 418	112 160	39 010	151 170

Source: Information supplied by letter from the Department of Labour, MOLIP, 31 August 2018

Annex IV : MOLIP Complaints Mechanism (July 2013 – May 2018)

Year	Total	Death	Injury (no compensation)	Missing	Arrest	Employ. contract	Recruitment fee	Other
July-Dec 2013	21	2	-	-	4	-	4	11
2014	85	35	7	4	6	10	4	19
2015	194	52	4	10	26	38	16	48
2016	445	53	50	13	25	81	94	129
2017	670	101	55	26	35	62	73	318
Jan-May 2018	386	40	23	35	14	19	22	233
Total	1801	283	139	88	110	210	213	758

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Migration data for policy development: An appraisal of data and statistics on international labour migration in Myanmar

This Briefing paper is one in a series of tools providing technical input on a range of issues important to the good governance of international labour migration. The tools are produced by the ILO-Yangon under the Developing Internal and International Labour Migration Governance (DIILM) project funded by the Livelihood and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT).

Recognizing the importance of reliable, comprehensive and up to date statistics for the development of evidence-based policies, the briefing paper provides practical support to policy-makers and practitioners on the collection of data based on the International Labour Migration Statistics in ASEAN (ILMS) methodology and following the guidelines in the Handbook for Improving the Production and Use of Migration Data for Development. The first section of the paper introduces key concepts and definitions used internationally for data collection related to migration, addresses the challenges in collecting reliable data and identifies how certain data bases can feed into policy development in countries of origin, destination and for bilateral agreements. Section two provides details of the data and statistics currently available in Myanmar, under the three internationally recognized sources: Population Census; Administrative Data and Sample Surveys. This section also provide available data on Myanmar migrants in countries of destination. Finally the paper provides a set of recommendations to improve data collection for evidence-based policy development and for reporting on the progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals related to labour migration. The Annex provide detailed tables of current available statistics.

It is hoped this Briefing Paper will also stimulate new ideas for future data collection and support the integration of labour migration into national development plans.

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ISBN: 978-92-2-132774-5