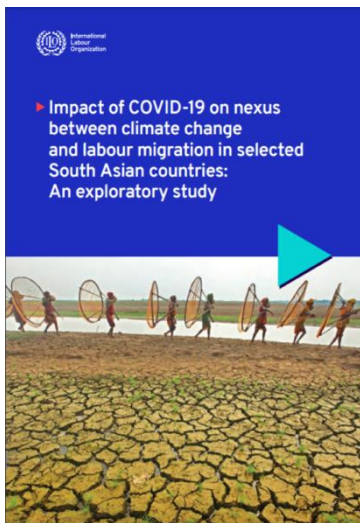


► Impact of COVID-19 on nexus between climate change and labour migration in selected South Asian countries: An exploratory study

Report summary



Climate change has been identified as the single greatest risk impeding the achievement of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals, and migration linked to climate change can increase vulnerability in the absence of protection safeguards. In South Asia, climate change can affect the world of work, through extreme heat, droughts, or floods. The region has a history of climate vulnerability, displacement and people migrating for work. With the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the risks to the world of work have been magnified, both in rural and urban areas, particularly in the informal economy.

The study seeks to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the nexus between climate change, the labour market and migration in selected South Asian countries, particularly Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, to better understand how internal and international migrant workers who moved in the context of climate change have been affected by the outbreak of COVID-19.

Why is this relevant?

The research draws on the diverse challenges experienced by internal and international climate-affected migrant workers from these selected South Asian countries and collates good examples and innovative measures undertaken by governments and civil society organizations to protect migrant workers during the pandemic. The research also offers some policy recommendations while factoring in the intersectional realities of migrant workers.

Full version of the report can be assessed [here](#).

► Agenda for report launch (GMT + 5:30)

Opening and welcome

15h00-15h10

- ◆ **Michelle Leighton**, Branch Chief, MIGRANT, International Labour Organization, Switzerland

Introductory remarks:

15h10-15h15

- ◆ **Dagmar Walter**, Director, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia and Country Office for India

Keynote address

15h15-15h30

- ◆ **Ovais Sarmad**, Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Presentation of report

15h30-15h50

- ◆ **Professor Tasneem Siddiqui**, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Discussion

15h50-16h30

- ◆ **Shabarinath Nair, (Moderator)** Regional Migration Specialist, ILO New Delhi
- ◆ **Katy Barwise, (Discussant)** Sr Programme Manager, United Nations Network on Migration, Geneva **(TBC)**

► Speakers



Mr Ovais Sarmad is **Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, at the Assistant Secretary-General level.

Mr Sarmad, previously served as Chief of Staff to the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) where he worked in several policy and management areas to strengthen the Organization's operational effectiveness in close consultation with IOM Member States. He was instrumental in the establishment of the organization's Ethics and Conduct Office and was a key team member negotiating the agreement which brought the IOM into the United Nations System.

Following an early career in financial management, both in public and private sectors in the United Kingdom, Mr Sarmad joined IOM in 1990, in Geneva, where he served notably as Chief of Budget, Director of Resource Management, Director of the Global Administrative Centre and Chief of Mission to the Philippines. Mr Sarmad holds a Bachelor of Commerce from Osmania University in Hyderabad, India and professional certification in management accountancy from the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants in London.



Ms Michelle Leighton is **Chief of the Labour Migration Branch for the International Labour Organization** where she directs the Office's work on labour migration and mobility, and supports policies and programs related to migrants and refugees. She has expertise in the fields of international law, labour migration, human rights, and economic development, and received her LL.M degree from the London school of Economics and Political Science, London, England in 1987.

She serves as an expert appointed to the UNFCCC Task Force on displacement related to climate change, and formerly a member of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Migration. Ms. Leighton has led global and field research teams, including on linkages between human migration and development, environmental and climate change. She has taught on law faculties in Asia, Europe and the United States and authored numerous publications.



Ms Dagmar Walter is **Director of the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia and Country Office for India**. Ms Dagmar Walter has over 20 years of experience with the ILO and has worked across Africa, Europe, Americas and now in Asia. Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 through integrated technical assistance, she strives to foster efficiency and team spirit among the ILO constituents, stakeholders and development partners. Her key expertise includes tackling employment and social protection challenges from a gender and international labour rights perspective. She is a strong advocate of decent work and social dialogue to achieve a better future of work.



Tasneem Siddiqui is a **Professor of Political Science at the University of Dhaka** and the founding **Chair of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU)** the premier migration think tank of Bangladesh. Her works on climate change adaptation and migration, disaster induced migration, drivers and impact of internal and international male and female labour migration, migration governance, diaspora, remittances, safe and sustainable cities inclusive to migrants, have been published in the journals of Population and Environment, Development Policy Review, Urban Studies and in different volumes of Palgrave Macmillan, Edward Edgar, Routledge, Springer etc.

She led the drafting of the National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement in Bangladesh, the national Overseas Employment Policy, 2006 and was a committee member that prepared the first draft of the Overseas Employment and Migration Act of 2013. Her research and advocacy work on female labour migration has contributed to lifting of ban on international migration of low skilled women from Bangladesh in 2003. She is in the Global Editorial Board of Oxford Journal of Migration Studies. Since June 2019 she has joined the state led international initiative, the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), as a member of the Advisory Committee. Prof. Siddiqui is a PhD in Asian and International Studies from Griffith University.



Shabarinath Nair is a **Labour Migration Specialist for South Asia**, based in the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) in New Delhi. He provides technical advisory services to seven countries in the sub-region: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Before joining the DWT, he was leading ILO's work on global migration policy including for the inter-governmental negotiations and adoption of the Global Compact for Migration and for the newly established UN Network on Migration with postings in both the ILO Headquarters in Geneva and at the ILO's Office for the United Nations in New York. He was also focal point for Asia and the Middle East in the Labour Migration Branch.

Shabarinath has a double degree in Communication / Asian and International Studies from Griffith University in Australia and an MA in International Relations from the Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations in Switzerland.