

International
Labour
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International labour migration statistics in South Asia

Establishing a subregional database and improving data
collection for evidence-based policy-making



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FOREWORD

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In South Asia and across the world, the effective governance of labour migration has emerged as a policy priority with weighty political, economic and social implications. Migration trends continue to evolve over time, and the challenges appear to have increased in complexity. New approaches are needed to ensure the advancement of a fair migration agenda, and a fair sharing of the prosperity labour migration can create, with policies that respond equitably to the interests of countries of origin and destination, to employers, and for all workers – nationals and migrants.

Effective measures must be grounded in evidence. For this, data on labour migration and migrant workers in South Asia disaggregated by sex, occupation and several other variables is of utmost importance. This priority has been reiterated in national and regional discussions, and at the global level, in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration. The need for improved data was also highlighted in the discussion on labour migration at the 106th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2017, in the Bali Declaration adopted at the 16th ILO Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting in 2016, and in the SAARC Plan of Action on Labour Migration. The ILO is playing a key role in supporting national statistical offices and other government agencies in responding to this need.

This report, *International labour migration statistics in South Asia: Establishing a subregional database and improving data collection for evidence-based policy-making*, is an important step in this direction. The report compiles the data that exist on labour migration and migrant workers in South Asia, highlights many challenges and limitations in the current statistical framework, and provides concrete recommendations on how data collection and analysis can be strengthened in the subregion. While readers will be able to observe migration developments and trends in the different countries, it should be noted that comparing data between countries remains a challenge because of the different approaches taken to data collection, including varying definitions and classifications utilized in national-level population surveys and administrative records.

We expect that the report will inform national, subregional, regional and international discourse on labour migration policies and programmes, and that it may instruct future technical cooperation on data collection, so that data and reporting will become more complete, timely and reliable. I would like to thank all of the contributors to this report, including our government counterparts, ILO staff and independent experts. This report is an excellent example of collaboration among the ILO country offices in the region, the Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia and the technical departments in Geneva.

Dagmar Walter

Director, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia and Country Office for India



 
FAHIMA AKHTER
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report provides a comprehensive analysis of statistics related to extraregional labour migration of South Asian nationals, referring to those migrating outside of the subregion from the following eight countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Where applicable and relevant to the statistical discussion, this report also includes conversations on developments and trends in extraregional labour migration, migrant worker attributes (such as sex, skill level, occupation, country of destination, method of recruitment and more) and associated thematic areas (such as remittances) in South Asia. The developments and trends discussed are primarily those that can be derived from relevant quantitative data produced at the national and international levels up to 31 December 2017 (no data or trends are included for 2018).

This statistically-focused subregional report relies on data and observations derived from the first nine months of data collection for the International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) Database initiative for South Asia, a project initiated in October 2017 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) for South Asia. To complement related efforts at the global level and in other subregions, the South Asian ILMS database has the following objectives:

- (1) to provide an openly-available, relevant, comprehensive and timely information source to enable evidence-based policy-making on international labour migration from South Asia;
- (2) to map the existing data sources at the national level, including information on their scope, completeness, comparability and possible gaps that could be filled through capacity building; and
- (3) to define a set of tables of relevance on international labour migration as a standard reference point for future data collection, publication and analysis.

To this end, the report discusses the current state of ILMS in South Asia, including themes of:

(1) relevance; (2) accuracy; (3) timeliness; (4) accessibility; (5) interpretability; (6) comparability; (7) coherence; (8) methodological soundness; and (9) integrity of subregional and country-level international labour migration statistics.

Based on this discussion, Section 5 of this report also presents an extensive set of subregional and country-level recommendations for improving labour migration statistics, as a means for more informed and timely evidence-based policy-making on the governance of labour migration.

The stock of South Asian nationals residing outside of South Asia increased from just under 24 million in 1990 to more than 38 million as of 2017. While intraregional migration used to be greater than extraregional migration, these trends have changed drastically in the past 20 years. In fact, the stock of South Asians living outside of South Asia outnumbered those who were living abroad within the subregion by more than 20 million in 2017 (UNDESA 2017a).

The primary countries of destination for South Asian nationals residing outside of South Asia in 2017 were: (1) Saudi Arabia; (2) United Arab Emirates; (3) United States; (4) the Islamic Republic of Iran; (5) Kuwait; (6) United Kingdom; (7) Oman; (8) Canada; (9) Malaysia; and (10) Australia (UNDESA, 2017a). These destination countries reflect a number of prominent migrant worker corridors¹ of both low-skilled and semi-skilled temporary migrants in construction, domestic work, services and other sectors in the Middle East and South-East Asia, as well as highly-skilled migrants in North America, Western Europe and Oceania.

The existing realities in labour migration dynamics of South Asian nationals have been reflected in the extraregional focus of this report. In addition, regional intergovernmental organizations such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have included extraregional labour migration in their policy agendas, including with the adoption of the 2016 SAARC Plan of Action on Labour Migration. In particular, the SAARC Plan of Action also recognizes the importance of labour migration statistics, by committing to strengthening the capacity of government authorities and improving the policy impact of migration through measures such as “the creation of a shared database or web portal with information about migration trends and patterns” (SAARC, 2016).

The call for better data on migrant workers is not just emanating from within the subregion. The International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) has outlined the need for “harmonized labour migration statistics... to inform labour market and migration policies” (ILO, 2013a). Additionally, data is an important factor in migration-related initiatives included in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, with Target 17.18 in particular committing to “enhancing capacity building support to developing countries to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by several characteristics, including migratory status” (UNDESA, n.d.c.).

A number of regional and international agendas have also included commitments to improving data and understanding of thematic areas very closely related to labour migration – in particular, remittances.

South Asia is the second-highest remittance-receiving region in the world after East Asia and the Pacific (World Bank, n.d.a.), and recorded remittances are helping to reduce poverty and improve health and education outcomes, while providing a valuable source of foreign exchange. South Asia received US\$110 billion in remittances in 2016 alone (World Bank, n.d.a.), and remittances as a percentage of GDP are extremely high in a number of South Asian countries, including Nepal (31.3 per cent of GDP), Sri Lanka (8.9 per cent), Pakistan (7.1 per cent) and Bangladesh (6.1 per cent) in 2016 (World Bank, n.d.a.).

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the G20 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) all outlined commitments to reducing remittance transaction costs. Target 10.c in Goal 10 of the SDGs committed to decreasing transaction costs to less than three per cent, and to eliminating remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent (UNDESA, n.d.b.). However, existing data show that there exist a number of remittance corridors in South Asia where costs still exceed 5 per cent. In addition, at a subregional level, although remittance transaction costs in South Asia have decreased substantially to 5.4 per cent as of Quarter 1,

1. With the exception of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is also a prominent country of destination of Afghan refugees and people in refugee-like situations.

2017 (World Bank, 2017), this still exceeds the overall goal of less than three percent previously mentioned.

Despite the large wealth of data on remittances both at the national and international levels, there are still significant gaps. Particularly in South Asia, the size and scale of informal remittances is unknown, but reports have suggested that about two-thirds of remittance recipients in South Asia have used informal channels (Kendall et. al., 2013; World Bank, 2013). Better data on informal remittances is required to inform evidence-based policy-making on migrant worker remittances, in order to update financial infrastructures and address structural issues, to facilitate the sending of remittances and minimize the additional costs incurred of sending money across borders.

(i) Key challenges in international labour migration statistics in South Asia

Statistics on labour migration can be derived from a number of sources, including Labour Force Surveys (LFS), population censuses and administrative records. However, each source of ILMS has specific drawbacks. An analysis of LFS schedules in South Asian countries shows that important questions on migration – including nationality/citizenship, birthplace, previous residence and household members abroad – are often not being included. Even though population censuses are usually the most comprehensive sources (in terms of coverage) of international migration statistics in any country, questionnaires in many South Asian countries have left out crucial questions on international migration and international migrant workers – in particular, the location of household members abroad, as well as questions specifically pertaining to return migration.

Administrative records – such as those maintained by various government agencies on individuals registering for employment abroad prior to departure, individuals gaining clearance for emigration, migrant workers applying for exit visas, or migrant workers obtaining foreign labour permits – are some key sources of international labour migration statistics in the South Asian subregion, and some of the key sources relied upon in the South Asian ILMS. However, administrative records are only reliable if the administrative system is well maintained, coverage is complete and high-quality reporting is maintained (IOM, 2008).

In South Asia, the period of time in which data have been collected, as well as the size and scope of the populations covered, varies significantly between countries. Additionally, data coverage in South Asian countries is affected by definitional constraints, by the specific methodologies employed and by the overall quality of data collection. There is yet to be a universally agreed-upon statistical definition of a migrant worker (not to be confused with the international legal definition established in the 1990 UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families), and different countries employ different criteria to identify international migrants and international migrant workers by, for example, applying different minimum durations of residence (IOM, 2017). As a result of differing definitions, data temporalities and methodologies, it is currently not possible to compare labour migration statistics from administrative records between countries in South Asia. Comparison between countries is further inhibited given that LFSs, population censuses and administrative records in South Asia often do not follow international standard classifications, such as those outlined in the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC, Rev. 4), the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), or the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93), to name a few.

In addition, while many South Asian countries may collect relevant data on total migrant worker outflows and on migrant worker attributes – e.g. sex, skill level, occupation, method of recruitment or province/state of origin – they may not make these data available for public use.

Finally, in the South Asian subregion, certain migrants may not be registering for employment abroad with the relevant government agency prior to departure and are thusly not being captured in administrative records on nationals employed abroad. Many intraregional migrant workers, migrant workers in an irregular situation, victims of trafficking and return migrants are likely not being captured in administrative records. Additionally, cost and policy barriers to registration may disincentivize certain migrant workers, particularly women, from registering in particular countries and contexts in the subregion, thus limiting the completeness of data on migrant worker outflows.

(ii) Current availability of international labour migration statistics produced in South Asian countries

Based on enquiries made by, and information available to the ILO, below is the availability (as of July 2018) of official and/or government administrative data on migrant worker attributes in South Asia. Some countries may collect data on one or a number of these attributes, but they may not publish these data or make them available for public use. Even if a country does collect and publish data on any of the below attributes, there may be a number of constraints in definitions employed, methodologies and coverage, as discussed in greater depth in the body of the report (Section 4). Many of these data sources also do not follow international standard classifications.

- Five of eight South Asian countries – Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – currently collect and publish data on **total outflows of nationals for employment abroad**;
- Only three countries in South Asia – Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka – currently collect and publish data on **sex disaggregation** of all nationals registering for employment abroad;
- Five countries in South Asia – Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – collect and publish data on the **countries of destination** of nationals registering for employment abroad;
- Four countries collect and publish data on **skill level** of nationals registering for employment abroad – Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. In each country, the classifications used to classify migrant skill level differ substantially, and do not reflect ISCO-08 standards;²
- Three countries collect and publish data on **occupation** of migrants registering for employment abroad each year – Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan – however, the occupational classifications utilized by each of these countries differ, and do not reflect ISCO-08 standards;

2. Nepal only has skill-level data available for 2017. While they are not publicly available, they are available from the Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE) upon special request.

- Three countries collect and publish disaggregated data on **method of recruitment** (individual basis or through a recruitment agency) of nationals registering for employment abroad – India, Sri Lanka and Nepal;
- Four countries – Nepal, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka – collect and publish disaggregated data on **province/state of origin** of migrant workers;³
- Four countries – Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan – currently maintain and release datasets on **fatalities of nationals employed abroad** (many other countries in South Asia may collect these data, but they may not be combined in a complete dataset and/or released for public use). These datasets are often difficult to obtain, are not released periodically and employ widely varying methodologies that rely on differing reporting mechanisms;
- Four countries – Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan – currently maintain and release complete datasets on **total welfare fund payments to the families of deceased migrant workers abroad** (other countries in South Asia may collect these data, but they may not be combined in a complete dataset and released for public use).

Additionally, there are a wide range of additional attributes and thematic points associated with labour migration statistics that could be collected and relied upon to inform effective evidence-based policy-making in South Asia. These include but are not limited to – data on recruitment costs borne by migrants, data on health of migrant workers, data on cause of fatality, data on educational attainment of nationals seeking employment abroad, data on repeat and return migration, on the economic activity of migrants abroad, as well as the status of employment of South Asian migrant workers before and after migrating. However, due to lack of availability of data on these aforementioned attributes, they have not been discussed in this report or included in Version I of the South Asian ILMS.

(ii) Key recommendations applicable throughout the subregion (country-specific recommendations are included in Section 5):

- (a) National working committees on international labour migration statistics** – form committees composed of statistics agencies, foreign employment ministries/agencies and other actors involved in the collection, dissemination and use of labour migration statistics;
- (b) Timely reporting in accessible formats** – make data available in downloadable datasets online on a monthly or semi-annual basis, updating and making provisional estimates final; with detailed technical notes including caveats and limitations; making data easy to find and access and present data in manipulable formats and with greater transparency;
- (c) Country-level annual statistical reports** – publish annual reports that combine and analyse available labour migration statistics from all relevant agencies, while communicating important definitions, caveats and limitations;

3. Data may be available only as district of origin. However, district-wise data may be easily combined into relevant provincial/state jurisdictions.

- (d) High-level technical meetings on international labour migration statistics at the national and subregional levels** – hold technical discussions on labour migration statistics in national, subregional and regional meetings, and linked to the agendas of existing regional platforms;
- (e) Adoption of international statistical standards and common migration indicators** – With support from the ILO and other international organizations, provide technical assistance to national-level actors producing international labour migration statistics to align data with international standards and classifications, in order to achieve comparability between countries in the subregion and beyond;
- (f) Cooperation with countries of destination** – establish relationships with statistics and immigration agencies in countries of destination to help close important gaps in knowledge;
- (g) Better data on return and repeat migration** – carry out special sample surveys at a national level, and incorporate relevant questions in Labour Force Surveys and population censuses, to better understand the dynamics of return and repeat migration of South Asian migrant workers;
- (h) Better data on female labour migration** – collect data to inform policies on women’s safe, orderly and regular migration, better ensure their rights and safety abroad, and to gauge whether measures introduced to ostensibly protect women are having the desired effect;
- (i) More data on informal remittances flows** – implement initiatives to collect better data on informal remittance flows through special sample surveys, as well as accompanying qualitative research on migrant worker motivations to send money through informal channels;
- (j) Redesign population surveys, labour force surveys and census questionnaires to reflect international migration** – filling gaps in existing survey schedules to include questions on household members abroad, the location of household members abroad and their employment characteristics;
- (k) Collect data on additional migrant attributes** – including repeat vs. first-time migration, migrant recruitment costs, migrant wages, occupation and status in employment in origin and destination countries;
- (l) Improve data collection to meet goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** – collective effort by national statistics offices and line ministries, with support from the ILO, to develop the methodologies and build capacity for measuring key migration-related indicators in the SDGs.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	gross domestic product
GFMD	Global Forum for Migration and Development
GNI	gross national income
ILMS	International Labour Migration Statistics
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDA	Sustainable Development Agenda
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency



01

OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

South Asia is a dynamic region, with millions of people crossing borders, both intraregionally (within the subregion) and extraregionally (outside of the subregion). In fact, four South Asian countries featured in the world's top-20 countries of origin of international migrants in 2017, including India (first), Bangladesh (fifth), Pakistan (seventh) and Afghanistan (eleventh) (UNDESA, 2017a). Collectively, there were over 38 million South Asian nationals living outside of their countries of origin in 2017 – both in other South Asian countries and farther afield (UNDESA, 2017a).

In the past few decades, migration patterns have changed considerably. In 1960, most South Asian nationals living outside of their countries of origin were residing in other South Asian countries; however, the stock of South Asian nationals residing extraregionally has now grown to significantly outnumber intraregional migrants. In fact, over 76 per cent of all South Asian nationals living outside of their respective countries in 2017 were living in countries outside of the subregion, particularly in Western Asia (including Gulf States), Western Europe, North America and South-East Asia (UNDESA, 2017a).

Employment is a primary driver of migration out of South Asia. After 1973, the hike in oil prices led to a high demand of low- and semi-skilled labour in the Middle East (Wickramasekara, 2011). With significant labour shortages in oil-rich countries in the Gulf, employers and governments sought temporary foreign labour, including from South Asia, to fulfil a variety of positions in construction, domestic work, services and other sectors (Wickramasekara, 2011). Since the 1970s, contract labourers and temporary migrants from the primary countries of origin in South Asia – namely Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – have migrated primarily to the Middle East, and to a lesser extent to Malaysia and Singapore. Permanent migration of highly skilled South Asian migrants, as well as of medium-term migration of students, continues to take place to Western Europe (particularly United Kingdom), United States, Canada and Oceania (primarily Australia).

With unprecedented population growth in recent years in a number of South Asian countries, labour migration out of the subregion can help to alleviate labour surpluses. Income generated by foreign employment, particularly in the form of remittances to origin countries, carries

immense potential for poverty alleviation and development. Additionally, in some cases, migrants returning from abroad may bring with them new knowledge, experiences and skills that, given successful economic and social reintegration, carry the possibility of new opportunities for diversifying and transforming labour markets in South Asia.

However, along with the many benefits that emerge with labour migration out of the subregion, there are a number of policy and governance challenges that arise, particularly concerning the protection of migrants. Low-skilled South Asian migrants face numerous challenges related to “malpractices in the recruitment process; job contracts and work specifications; working and living conditions abroad; and social security for migrants and returnees” (Srivastava and Pandey, 2017). Migrant workers in an irregular situation face additional challenges and vulnerabilities (Srivastava and Pandey, 2017).

As labour migration has continued to grow in importance and scale within and out of South Asia, it has become increasingly important for governments and policy-makers to implement effective, evidence-based policy-making to maximize the individual and societal benefits – e.g. in areas of employment, education and upward mobility – of labour migration for South Asian nationals, while still maintaining the rights, safety, dignity and well-being of those seeking employment abroad.

1.2 Improving data collection and sharing

Collecting, sharing and analysing statistics on international labour migration is one method of informing evidence-based policy-making on labour migration. One method of disseminating key data on international labour migration in any region, including in South Asia, is through the establishment of comprehensive labour market information systems, which “provide an essential basis for employment and labour policies, and inform the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies that are better focused and targeted.” Such systems may also “contribute to a reduction in the transaction costs of labour markets as they help overcome incomplete information of labour market agents” (ILO, n.d.a).

Governments and social partners in South Asia, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations have clearly voiced the need for improved collection and sharing on labour migration statistics (see Box 1.1 for examples). While a number of statistical agencies and foreign employment ministries already collect a wealth of important information on migrant workers departing their respective countries of origin for employment abroad, these sources often face a number of obstacles in data quality, completeness and coverage. Additionally, disseminating the data produced by various ministries and agencies in the subregion is difficult, particularly when, primarily due to security concerns, a number of protocols at the country level inhibit various country-level actors from sharing relevant data. Currently, no subregional collaborative framework for standardizing and sharing international labour migration statistics exists in South Asia.

It is important to acknowledge that better data may not always lead to more informed evidence-based policy-making, as labour migration policy is a political decision driven by a number of different social, economic and partisan interests, and data may be used or interpreted in different ways. There are likely gaps in the existing international standards on maintaining data security and confidentiality, as well as the ethical use of data. As a result, there is also the potential for abuse of data platforms and misuse of confidential and sensitive data related to

international migrants (Crisp, 2018). It is important to invest in additional methods and resources for informing better evidence-based policy-making at the same time that resources are invested in improved collection and dissemination of international labour migration statistics.

1.3 Objectives of the research

This report corresponds to a larger project initiated by the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) for South Asia⁵ to establish an International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) database for the South Asian subregion, collecting relevant and available data on international labour migration and the employment characteristics of those migrants departing the subregion for work.

The proposed ILMS seeks to act as a key resource, presenting data in a single, accessible location where they can be utilized by policy-makers, researchers, academics and regional and international organizations to inform policy discourse, implementation and monitoring, as well as to guide technical assistance. This report outlines important details of this ongoing project, as well as initial analysis of overall developments and trends derived from these data, and of the caveats, coverage and limitations of existing sources of labour migration statistics in South Asia.

1.4 Overview and structure of the report

Section 2 provides an overview of the proposed ILMS database for South Asia. Section 3 then describes existing and emerging trends in international migration out of South Asia, covering variables ranging from international migrant stocks and flows, to remittances and remittance transaction costs. This section relies primarily on global sources of data produced and made available by organizations such as the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank. Section 4 narrows the focus towards labour migration – Section 4.1 discusses definitions of an international migrant worker, while Section 4.2 provides a brief overview of South Asian labour migration. Section 4.3 then discusses the primary sources of labour migration statistics in South Asia. Section 4.4 provides an analysis of the current coverage, quality and scope of particular administrative records that collect and publish relevant statistics on labour migration in South Asian countries and presents an assessment of emerging data and trends. Finally, Section 5 sets out a number of subregional and country-level recommendations on improving the collection and dissemination of timely labour migration statistics in South Asia, with the aim of informing better evidence-based policy-making on labour migration.

This report analyses labour migration outflow data availability in South Asian countries, and provides limited analysis of data and trends in labour migration when directly related to data coverage and availability. It is not intended to provide extensive conclusions or explanations of labour migration trends derived from the data. For subregional reports on trends in South Asia, one may reference, for example: Wickramasekara, 2011; GIZ and ILO, 2015; Doherty et. al., 2014; Sharma et. al., 2016; Srivastava and Pandey, 2017; and Khadria, 2005. There are also reports covering specific thematic areas. See for example, ILO 2016b (migrant fatalities), Ozaki,

5. For additional information regarding ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia, visit the website at: <http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/lang-en/index.htm> [accessed 10 July 2018].

2012 (remittances in South Asia), Rahman and Yeo, 2014 (informal remittances transfer to South Asia) and both Sijapati, 2015 and Timothy and Sasikumar, 2012 (women's labour migration within and out of South Asia).

There are also a number of useful reports on migration statistics available at the country level, including the Nepal Ministry of Labour and Employment's *Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal: 2014/2015* (MLE, 2016),⁶ the Pakistan Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Development *Labour Migration from Pakistan: 2015 Status Report* (MOPHRD, 2016), or the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment's *Annual Statistical Report for Foreign Employment* for 2016 and 2017 (SLBFE, 2016; SLBFE, 2017).⁷ In addition, the Bangladesh Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) has made a number of thematic reports available on its website:

<http://www.bmet.gov.bd/BMET/downloadAction>) [accessed 10 July 2018].

6. An update to this report in Nepal exists for 2015/16 – 2016/17; however, it has not yet been published at the time this report was written.

7. The country-level report for Nepal was released by the Nepal Ministry of Labour and Employment with support from the ILO, IOM and the Asia Foundation. The country-level report for Pakistan is a joint report released by the Pakistan Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Development and the ILO.

Box 1.1**Support for improving labour migration statistics and evidence-based policy-making in South Asia and beyond**

- ◆ “Recalling the 2030 Agenda, up-to-date, reliable and comparable labour migration data, disaggregated by age and sex, among others, are key for evidence-based policy-making, the evaluation of the impact of labour migration schemes, and the protection of migrant workers’ rights. Harmonization of concepts and definitions of labour migration is essential, as is the collection of data on specific economic sectors in which migrant workers are predominant. These should be part of national and regional data collection plans.”

- International Labour Conference, 106th session (2017)^a

- ◆ “Elaboration and implementation of comprehensive stakeholder defined, evidence-based national migration policy frameworks addressing legal, economic, social, labour, and development dimensions with an explicit whole of government approach”.

- UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, Target 10.7^b

- ◆ “[The ICLS recognizes] the need to promote the development of international standards, common methodologies and approaches on labour migration statistics”

- 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (2013)^c

- ◆ “It has become essential/imperative to improve... data collection and data sharing on issues relating to migration trends and patterns, including return migration. To the extent possible, the data should be disaggregated according to gender, sector and skill levels, with a view to strengthening evidence-based policies.”

- SAARC Plan of Action on Labour Migration, Kathmandu (2016)^d

- ◆ “A comprehensive information and database on labour migration is a cross cutting foundation for formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies on good governance, protection and development linkages.”

- National Labour Migration Policy of Sri Lanka (2008)^e**Sources:**

a ILO, 2017a.

b UNDESA, 2016.

c ILO, 2013.

d SAARC, 2016.

e Sri Lanka Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare, 2008.



02

A SOUTH ASIAN INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION STATISTICS (ILMS) DATABASE

2.1 The need for improved data on international labour migration

There have been numerous calls for more reliable, detailed and transparent information on international migration and labour migration in South Asia and at the global level. For example, SAARC⁸ drafted a Plan of Action on Labour Migration at a consultative workshop in May 2016 (Kathmandu Post, 2016), which outlined a commitment to information exchange and knowledge building on labour migration in the subregion. Specifically, the Plan of Action outlines a commitment to “strengthen the capacity of government authorities to respond to the needs as well as improve the policy impact of migration” through measures such as “the creation of a shared database or web portal with information about migration trends and patterns, policies, best practices, challenges, agreements/arrangements where possible” (SAARC, 2016).

Within the ILO, the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) (2013) outlined the need for “harmonized labour migration statistics... to inform labour market and migration policies”, noting the “lack of international statistical standards and common methodologies” between countries (ILO, 2013a). The 19th ICLS also recommended to “strengthen data collection, research and capacity development in order to facilitate evidence-based policy-making and to develop tools for dealing with the internationalization of labour markets to the benefit of all; and promote... the exchange of knowledge on labour migration among countries” (ILO, n.d.d.). Finally, an integral part of the ongoing work of the 19th ICLS was the establishment of “a working group with the aim of sharing good practices, discussing and developing a work plan for defining international standards on labour migration statistics that can inform labour market and migration policy”, as well as the preparation of “a progress report for discussion” that will be delivered at the next (20th) ICLS to take place in October 2018 (ILO, n.d.d.).⁹

8. SAARC, or the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, is a regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of nations consisting of eight Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. For more information, see: <http://saarc-sec.org/about-saarc> [accessed 15 Jan. 2018].

9. For further information on ILO’s global efforts towards better labour migration statistics, please reference the following link: <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/policy-areas/statistics/lang--en/index.htm>.

Conclusions from the 19th ICLS are available at: <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/policy-areas/statistics/lang--en/index.htm>. Additionally, conclusions on the February 2018 ILO Meeting of Experts on Labour Statistics are available at: http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/20/preparatory-meetings/WCMS_624064/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 28 Mar. 2018]

Amongst a number of migration-related initiatives included within the Sustainable Development Goals, Target 17.18 specifically outlines “enhancing capacity building support to developing countries to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by several characteristics, including migratory status” (UNDESA, n.d.c.).

The formulation of labour market information systems capable of accurately capturing international migrant workers’ stocks and flows can help inform regional and global evidence-based policy-making on labour migration (ILO, 2015a); however, there is currently a lack of a regional framework that could assist in the collection and dissemination of reliable, relevant, timely, accessible, comparable and coherent data.

In response, the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) for South Asia commenced a project to establish an International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) database for South Asia, in October 2017.¹⁰

Box 2.1

Building on the ASEAN experience

In 2014, the ILO launched an ILMS database for ASEAN (covering 10 South-East Asian countries), and has since updated it on an annual basis. The process was documented in a guide to assist other regions in developing similar tools. An *Analytical report on the international labour migration statistics database in ASEAN: Improving data collection for evidence-based policy-making*,^a similar to this report, highlights key trends and puts forward recommendations on improving data collection and sharing among ASEAN countries.

The ILO DWT in South Asia has consulted colleagues and consultants who worked on implementation of the ASEAN ILMS, as well as referred to the aforementioned analytical report in order to gather information and best practices in informing current and future steps for the South Asian ILMS.

Source: ILO, 2015a.

For additional information on the ASEAN ILMS, please see: http://www.ilo.org/asia/WCMS_416366/lang--en/index.htm.

2.2 ILMS South Asia vision and objectives

The ILMS database aims to gather together official data sources on international migrant workers stocks and flows in South Asia, in order to: (1) provide an openly-available, relevant, comprehensive and timely information source to enable evidence-based policy-making on international labour migration from South Asia; (2) to map the existing data sources that countries collect, including information on their scope, completeness, comparability and possible gaps that could be filled through capacity building; and (3) to define a set of tables of relevance on international labour migration as a standard reference point for future data collection, publication and analysis.

10. Data coverage in any country is affected by definitional constraints, by the specific methodologies employed and by the overall quality of data collection. There is still no universally employed statistical definition of a migrant worker, and many countries might conceptualize migrant workers differently. For additional discussion on definitions and limitations, see Section 4.1 and 4.4.1.

Data collected have been derived primarily from those data already published in official reports and datasets online. In the initial stage, to lessen the burden and eliminate the risk for confusion, member States have not been required to fill in the datasets. These activities have instead been undertaken solely by the ILO. Establishing a subregional data sharing platform as extensive as the South Asian ILMS requires ownership of the project amongst all relevant stakeholders at the national level. An integral exercise in building trust and cooperation among country-level stakeholders is through national and subregional meetings and capacity-building workshops. The ILO has convened meetings of stakeholders in a number of countries, and also a regional technical meeting in November 2017; however, for the initiative to become sustainable, these meetings should be institutionalized at the national and regional levels.

Box 2.2

Additional ILO ILMS initiatives at the regional and global levels

The ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand, with support from the ILO Department of Statistics in Geneva, has continually been engaged in efforts to improve the collection of labour migration data. Through cooperation with other national entities such as KOSTAT of the Republic of Korea, ILMS collection efforts have expanded beyond ASEAN to various countries in Asia and Pacific region, including a number of ILO member States in South Asia.

In 2018, the ILO Department of Statistics sent a standard set of more than 20 tables on labour migration to a number of member States in Asia and the Pacific, with the aim to increase engagement through accessible online questionnaires that may then be uploaded to the ILO website. This in turn will also facilitate quick data uploading to the ILO's database on labour migration available in ILOSTAT (the ILO's online data sharing platform available for public use).

The South Asian ILMS includes many tables that are not included in the standard set of tables shared by the ILO Department of Statistics, and many are unique to the subregion. This project seeks to complement regional and global ILO statistics work by gathering additional data relevant to the unique dynamics and realities of international labour migration in South Asia. The South Asian ILMS project also seeks to account for the existing data limitations in the subregion that may prevent the completion of a certain number of the global-level standard tables on migrant worker attributes, by formulating a number of new tables of relevance for which data are available in many countries in the subregion.

For more information on the ILO Department of Statistics, as well as the Department's various areas of work, please refer to the following link: www.ilo.org/stat/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 08 Jun. 2018].

Upon collection of relevant available data, and upon completion of consultations with various government and non-government stakeholders working on migration and statistics in the subregion, ILO DWT in South Asia seeks to publish data from the South Asian ILMS on various

data sharing platforms, including the ILO's central ILOSTAT Database portal,¹¹ a powerful research tool that will be used by policy-makers, researchers, academics and by the ILO to influence policy discourse, implementation and monitoring, as well as to guide technical assistance.

Ideally, as the quality of information being collected improves over time, the proposed database will allow for more analysis of trends, comparability between countries of origin, addressing of knowledge gaps and the identification of areas for capacity building in the exchange of relevant data and analysis between countries, while serving as a tool towards more effective management of labour migration flows out of South Asia.

2.3 ILMS database scope and coverage

The data presented in the ILMS database focus on migration from South Asia, to mirror the SAARC agenda on labour migration, which commits to regional collaboration and cooperation on “safe, orderly and responsible management of labour migration from South Asia, to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of migrant workers in their destination countries outside the region” (ILO, 2014).

As has been the case with the ASEAN ILMS database (see box 2.1 above for additional information), South Asian countries are able to decide which data to contribute to the ILMS, given that not all agencies may be authorized to share specific data, or may not gather data on particular attributes of migrant workers leaving the subregion.

It is worth noting that due to existing differences in primary data sources between government agencies within and among countries in the subregion, it will not be possible to carry out direct comparisons between countries. However, over time, there could be a move towards more harmonious definitions, indicators and methodologies across South Asian countries, and the use of variables and classifications in line with the latest international standards.

The ILMS database is based on a reference period of 20 years, beginning in 1997 onward through 2017 (where data for 2017 were available). The 20-year reference period was chosen in order to enable better trends analysis, and is also meant to account for the possibility that some countries would only have limited data points available for some attributes over the twenty-year period.¹²

Despite cooperation amongst ILO subregional and country offices with national statistics offices and other custodians of labour migration statistics in South Asia, there are inevitable difficulties with this and other similar projects, including: (1) lack of response from the necessary data custodians at a country-level; (2) lack of availability of data for a proposed table; (3) hesitation by data custodians to share particular data given various concerns of confidentiality; (4) lack of compatibility between country and ILO/international formats; and (5) lack of time and staff resources in the ILO for formatting and inputting data from various agencies and countries in the region. It is important to take these factors into account when analysing the scope and results of this project.

11. Additional information on ILOSTAT is available at the following link:

http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/faces/wcnav_defaultSelection?_afLoop=619807521590988&_afrWindowMode=0&_afrWindowId=null [accessed 08 Jun. 2018].

12. The exceptions being table 2, which begins from 2000 onward, and table 10, which begins Quarter 3, 2013 onward.

2.4 Proposed ILMS tables

The tables collected under the ILMS Database for South Asia are decided upon through a continual consultative process in which ILO DWT in South Asia has established contact with a variety of stakeholders working in statistical agencies and ministries responsible for the governance of labour migration, the SAARC Secretariat and international organizations. This process has allowed for an assessment of data availability and a prioritization of data needs in the subregion.

The initial 11 tables in the first iteration of the South Asian ILMS were discussed and agreed upon by participants at the first ILO Technical Meeting on Labour Migration Statistics in South Asia, which took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka at the end of November 2017. In addition to deciding on the 11 tables, the meeting produced a concrete list of 11 recommendations and key outcomes on labour migration statistics (see Appendix IV for additional information on this meeting).¹³

Table 2.1 below shows the 11 existing tables in Version 1 of the forthcoming ILMS. It is worth mentioning that the number of tables in the ILMS may change, and are likely to increase over time in line with new priorities and improvements in data availability. It is important to note that because the ILMS currently focuses solely on labour migration to countries outside of the subregion (see Section 2.3 on scope and coverage), tables currently cover little to no information on stocks of international migrants in South Asia, nor inflows of migrant workers to South Asian

Table 2.1

Existing South Asian ILMS tables (as of July 2018)

Table	Disaggregation
1 Stock of South Asian nationals abroad	By sex and country of destination
2 Permanent immigrant inflows of South Asian nationals to OECD countries	By country of destination
3 Outflows of nationals for employment abroad	By sex and country of destination
4 Outflows of nationals for employment abroad	By skill level
5 Outflows of nationals for employment abroad	By occupation
6 Outflows of nationals for employment abroad	By method of recruitment (individual/agency)
7 Outflows of nationals for employment abroad	By province/state of origin
8 Inflows of external financial inflows	Remittances/Net ODA/FDI
9 Remittance transaction costs	For US\$200/US\$500 transfers from select migrant labour destination countries to origin countries
10 Reported fatalities of nationals employed abroad	By year
11 Total welfare fund payments paid out for deceased nationals employed abroad	By year

13. Those present at the technical meeting included representatives from ILO, IOM, the SAARC Secretariat, the Colombo Process Technical Support Unit, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Sri Lankan Institute of Policy Studies, as well as representatives from migration and statistical agencies from the governments of India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

countries.¹⁴ For a complete summary of data availability in each country for the 11 existing tables above (as of July 2018), see Appendix II.

As of July 2018, the ILO has been unable to obtain reliable data on economic activity of nationals for employment abroad in any South Asian country. As such, no data on this particular attribute are presented or discussed in Section 4.3, or included in the first iteration of the South Asian ILMS.

For future rounds of data collection, the processes of updating the ILMS database with additional statistics on migrant worker attributes is expected to improve in the region. It is also expected that the administrative records on outward labour migration will begin to align definitions and methodologies more closely with international standard classifications. As discussed in the Technical Meeting in Colombo, future tables in the South Asian ILMS may include:

- Repeat vs. first-time labour migration;
- Direct and indirect recruitment costs;
- Return migration;
- Cause of fatality of migrants employed abroad;
- Data on migrant worker health; and
- Data on educational attainment of migrants employed abroad.

In addition, depending on the interests of governments in the subregion, future iterations of the ILMS database may explore the available statistics on intraregional labour migration statistics, recognizing that the flows of migrant workers to other countries in the subregion constitute an important proportion of all South Asian nationals employed outside of their respective countries of origin.

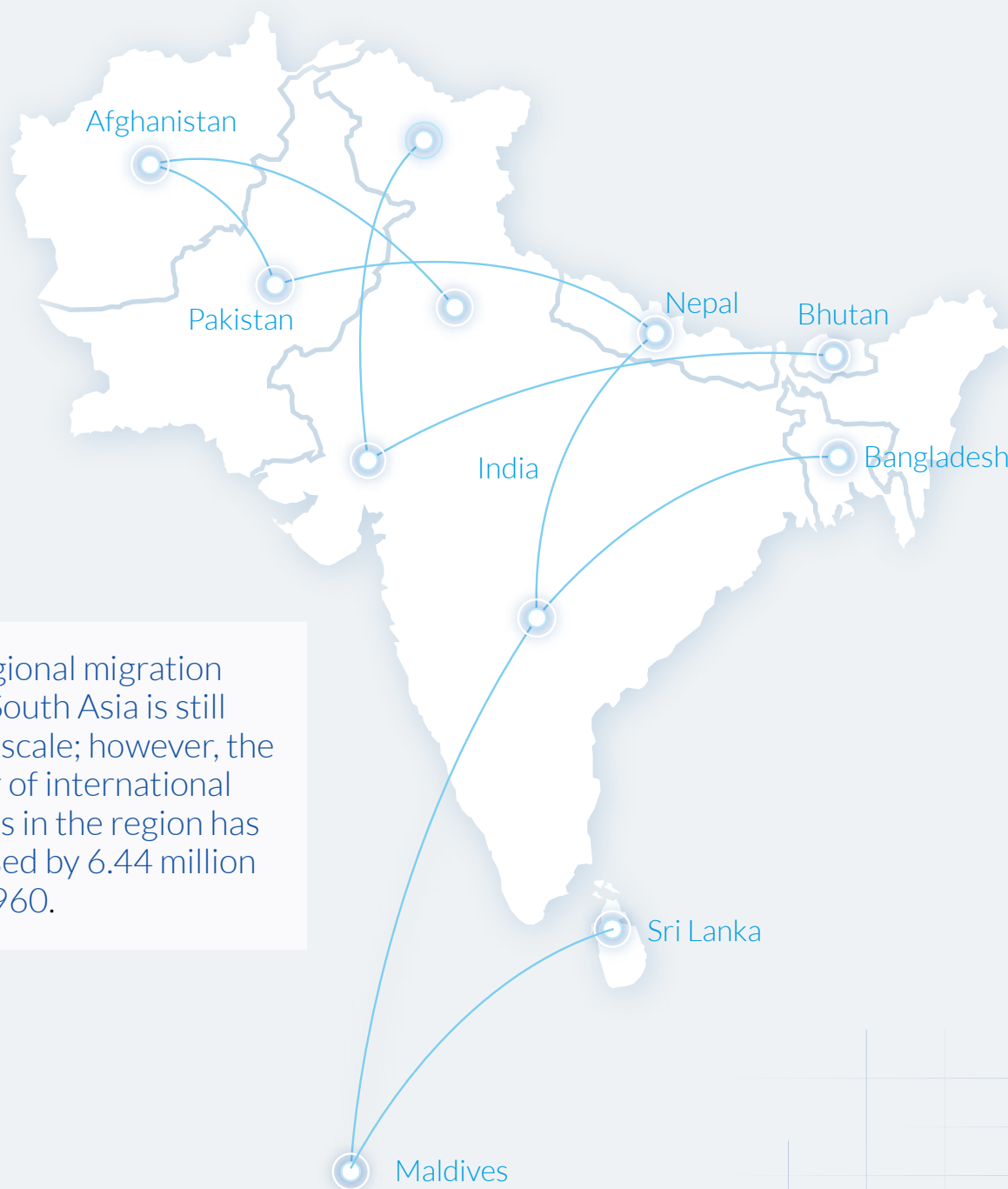
14. The only exception being table 1 – which includes stocks of nationals residing in all countries/territories/areas, including those in other South Asian countries – derived from UNDESA's Trends in International Migrant Stock, 2017 Revision (UNDESA, 2017a). This format differs rather substantially from the ASEAN ILMS, which is composed of three separate modules, the first two of which focused on international migrant stocks in ASEAN countries and international migrant inflows (including of migrant workers) to ASEAN countries.



Total stock of immigrants within South Asia and stock of South Asian nationals abroad



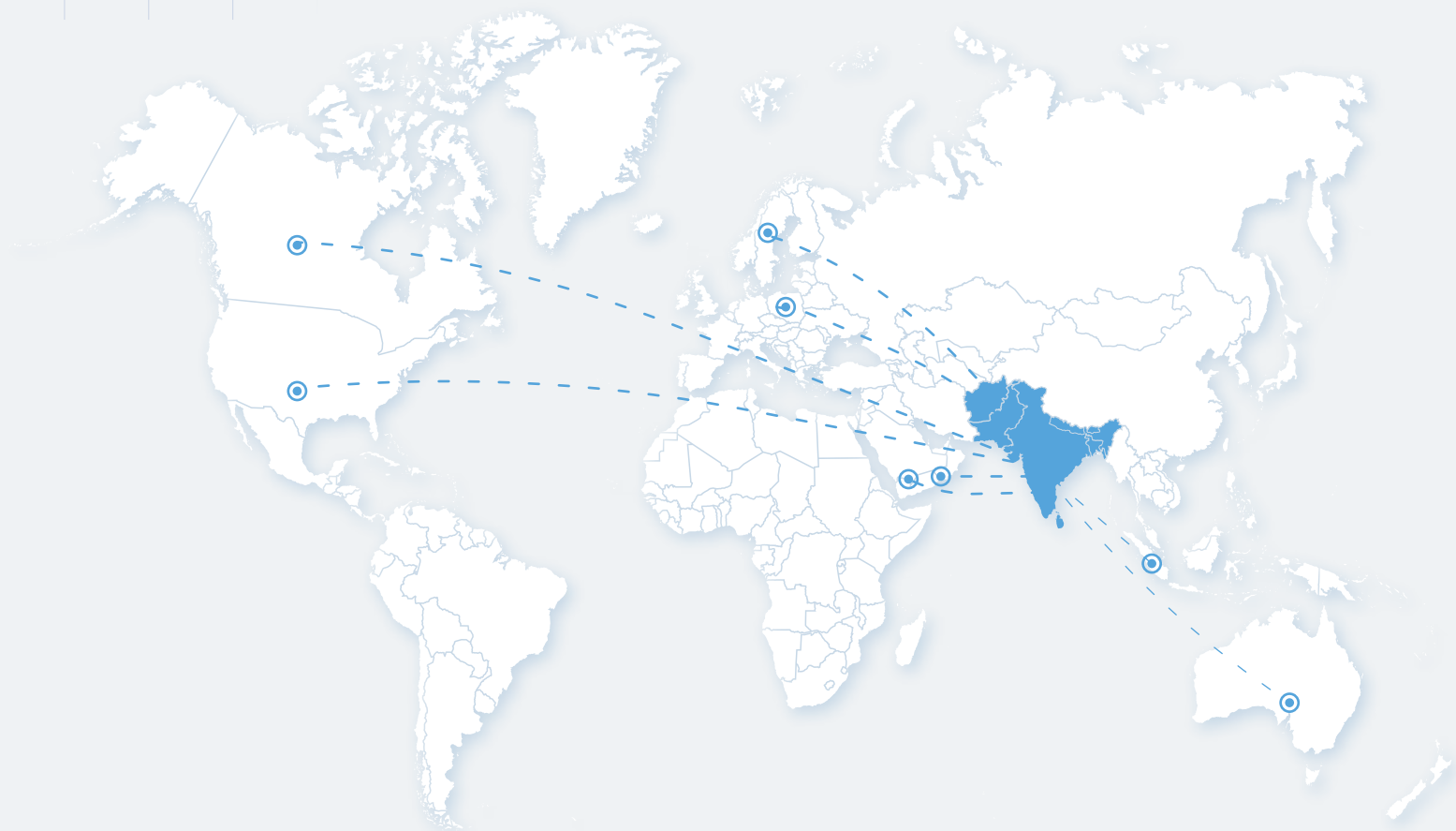
International
Labour
Organization



Intraregional migration within South Asia is still large in scale; however, the number of international migrants in the region has decreased by 6.44 million since 1960.



International
Labour
Organization



On the other hand, migration out of South Asia has increased substantially, particularly to the (GCC) Gulf Cooperation Council countries, as well as to North America and Western Europe



03

PROFILE OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS LIVING WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF SOUTH ASIA

3.1 UNDESA and the definition of international migrants

Both the 2006 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and the subsequent Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) placed a strong emphasis on the need for “accurate, up-to-date and policy relevant migration data” (UNDESA, n.d.a.). In response to this demand, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Population Division created the United Nations Global Migration Database (UNGMD), which provides publicly available empirical data on the global population of international migrants, disaggregated by country of birth and/or citizenship, sex and age (UNDESA, n.d.a.).

As per the 1998 *United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*, an ‘international migrant’ is defined as any person who has changed his or her country of usual residence (UNDESA, 1998). In consideration of increased global short-term movements of people for purposes other than tourism, the UN further differentiates between a long-term migrant – a person who moves to another country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of over 12 months – and a short-term migrant – a person who moves to another country other than that of his or her usual residence for at least three months but less than one year (UNDESA, 1998) (see Appendix I for additional key concepts and definitions utilized in this report).

Despite international efforts to harmonize international migration definitions for purposes of global statistical comparability, countries in South Asia¹⁵ and around the world employ different definitions of the term ‘migrant’. Namely, virtually all countries define international migrants based on two very different criteria – according to birthplace, or according to citizenship (ILO, 2015a). Citizenship and naturalization laws in any given country have a direct effect on how individuals are classified administratively as international migrants, and subsequently represented in statistics, leading to issues of comparability between countries depending on the definition employed.

15. UNDESA utilizes the term ‘Southern Asia’, a subregion consisting of nine countries including the Islamic Republic of Iran (UNDESA, 2017a). However, for the purposes of this report, the term ‘South Asia’ will be utilized, referring to eight countries in the ‘Southern Asia’ subregion: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka; but excluding the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In its international migration database, UNDESA equates international migrants with a country's foreign-born population whenever this information is available (UNDESA, 2017b).¹⁶ However, a significant number of countries and areas do not have data on place of birth. In this case, country of citizenship of those enumerated was used as the basis for the identification of international migrants in UNDESA estimates. While only one country in South Asia (Maldives, primarily a country of destination) identifies international migrants based on their country of citizenship (UNDESA, 2017a), some of the predominant destination countries of international migrants originating from South Asia – particularly the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)¹⁷ countries, as well as Malaysia – define international migrants based on their country of citizenship (UNDESA, 2017a). These factors may affect the accuracy and comparability of the total population of international migrants estimated to reside in South Asia, as well as the estimated population of South Asian nationals living abroad.

As a reputable global source of international migration statistics, the following section draws on UNDESA Population Division's international migrant stock¹⁸ estimates, which present an estimate of international migrant stocks for 232 countries/territories/areas¹⁹, with its first estimates dating back to 1960. Estimates in the dataset are based primarily on data from country-level population censuses, as well as population registers and nationally representative surveys (UNDESA, 2017b).²⁰ Since coverage of refugees in population censuses is often uneven and/or unreliable, UNDESA also adds refugee statistics provided by international agencies – UNHCR and UNRWA – to international migrant stock estimates “for all developing countries deemed not to have included refugees in their reported statistics on the stock of international migrants” (UNDESA, 2017b).²¹

3.2 South Asian migrant stocks

The following section presents an analysis of the total stock of international migrants residing in South Asia, as well as the stock of South Asian nationals living abroad, both within and outside of the subregion. The data in this section are derived from UNDESA estimates of international migrant stocks.

16. Equating international migrants living in any given country's population with those who are “foreign-born” more closely aligns with the United Nations' definition of an ‘international migrant’. In countries where an international migrant is classified based on his or her citizenship (known in Latin as *jus sanguinis*, or right of blood), an individual who has never migrated across international borders (e.g. changed his or her country of usual residence) may still be classified administratively – and thus in censuses and other country-level statistics – as an international migrant, despite having been born in that country.

17. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a regional intergovernmental organization comprised of six Member States – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

18. Migrant stock refers to the total number of international migrants present in a given country at a specific point in time. This differs from the concept of migrant flows – or the number of migrants entering or leaving a country during a given period (IOM, 2017).

19. A total of 232 countries/territories/areas were included in the 2017 Revision of UNDESA's Trends in International Migrant Stock (UNDESA, 2017b).

20. For additional details on the caveats, methodologies, and data sources used to generate its estimates, refer to UNDESA technical notes at:

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/docs/MigrationStockDocumentation_2017.pdf (UNDESA, 2017b).

21. For example, of the eight South Asian countries discussed in this report, UNDESA made an adjustment on all but two (Afghanistan and Bhutan) to include refugee statistics provided by UNHCR in 2017 (UNDESA, 2017a).

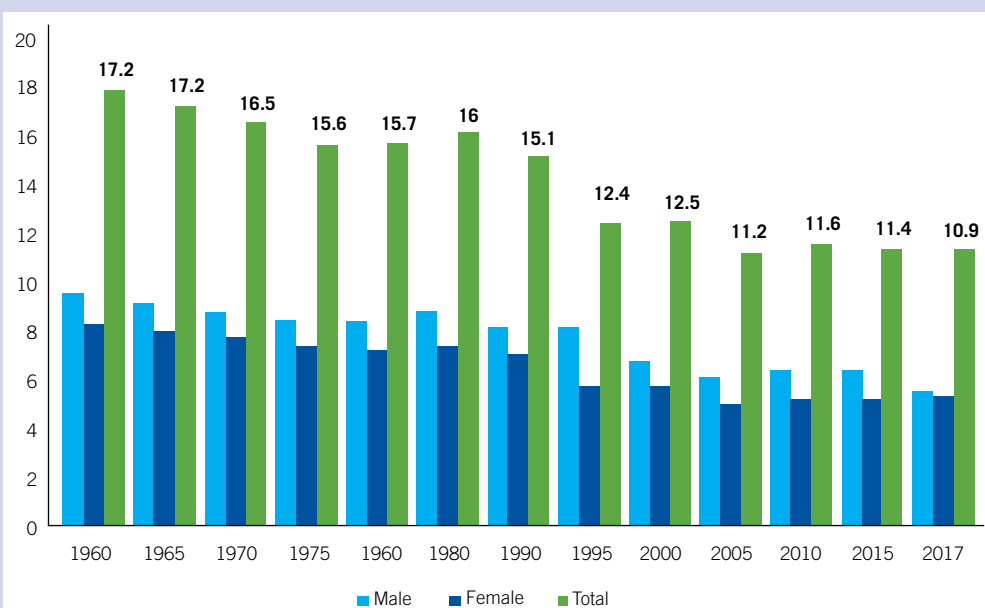
3.2.1 International migrants living in South Asia

The stock of international migrants living within the subregion has decreased substantially overall over the past six decades, from 17.82 million in 1960 (UNDESA, 2008), to 11.38 million in 2015 and 10.88 million in 2017 (see figure 3.1 below).²² Additionally, despite the large absolute number of international migrants living within the subregion, international migrants continue to represent a very small proportion of the population – in 1960, the total population of all South Asian countries was 580.9 million, meaning that international migrants constituted roughly 3.1 per cent of the subregion’s total population. By 1990, the total population of all South Asian countries was 1.13 billion, while the stock of international migrants in the subregion was just over 15 million, representing just 1.34 per cent of the subregion’s total population. By 2017, the total population of the subregion had increased to 1.79 billion, meaning that international migrants constituted just 0.61 per cent of the subregion’s total population (UNDESA, 2008; UNDESA, 2017a).

The stock of male international migrants living in South Asia in 1960 was 9.53 million, decreasing to 5.54 million by 2017, while the stock of female international migrants in South Asia has decreased overall from 8.29 million in 1960 to 5.35 million 2017 (UNDESA, 2017a). However, while male international migrants have historically outnumbered the stock of female international migrants in South Asia, the number of female international migrants now appears

Figure 3.1

Stock of international migrants residing in South Asia, 1960 – 2017 (millions)



Sources: UNDESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision. Datasets for the 2017 Revision available at: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml> (UNDESA, 2017a); UNDESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision. Datasets for the 2008 Revision available at: <https://esa.un.org/migration/index.asp?panel=4> (UNDESA, 2008).

22. This figure is not disaggregated based on country of birth, and reflects both South Asian nationals and non-South Asian nationals residing in the subregion who are classified as international migrants.

to have increased slightly in the last 12 years, by around 300,000, and are now nearly on par with the number of male international migrants in the subregion (UNDESA, 2017a).

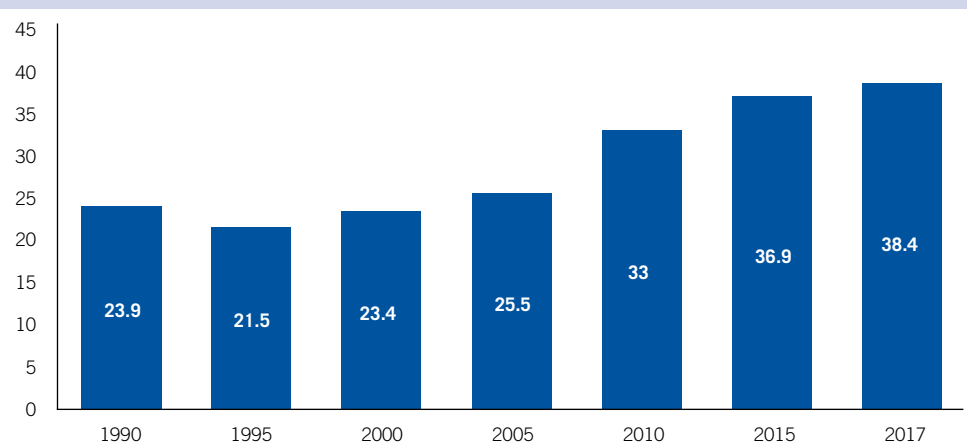
The proportion of international migrants in the subregion of working age – defined as 15 years of age or older – had remained relatively consistent between 1990 and 2015, fluctuating between 85 and 91 per cent (UNDESA, 2015a). However, in 2017, the proportion of international migrants in South Asia of working age had climbed to 94 per cent (UNDESA, 2017a).

3.2.2 South Asian nationals residing abroad

The number of South Asian nationals living abroad (both in other South Asian countries and outside of the subregion) has increased substantially, from 23.89 million in 1990 to over 38 million as of 2017 (see figure 3.2) (UNDESA, 2017a).

Figure 3.2

Stock of South Asian nationals living abroad 1990 – 2017 (millions)



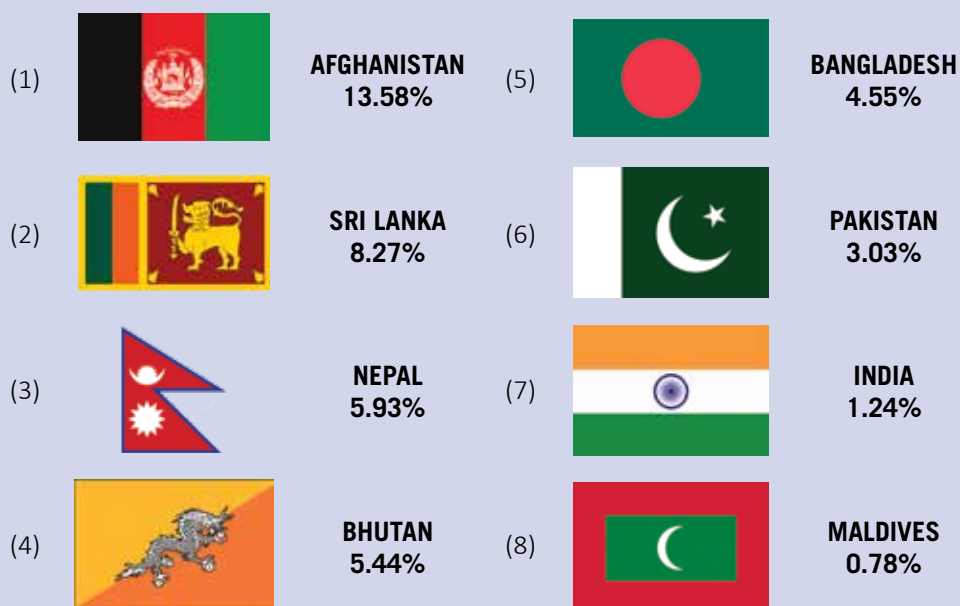
Note: Total stock of South Asian nationals abroad represents those residing in other South Asian countries, as well as those living extraregionally.

Source: UNDESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision. Datasets for the 2017 Revision available at <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml> (UNDESA, 2017a).

Of the subregion's eight countries discussed in this report, Afghanistan had the largest proportion of nationals abroad compared to its total population, while Maldives had the smallest proportion of nationals abroad compared to its total population. Figure 3.3 orders the eight South Asian countries according to percentage of each country's nationals living abroad (UNDESA, 2017a).

Figure 3.3

Proportion of South Asian nationals abroad compared with the total country population

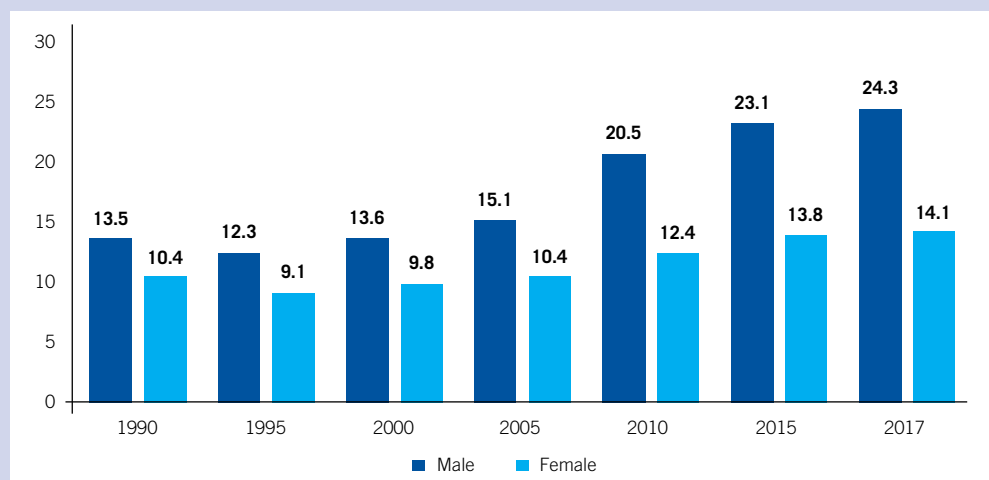


Source: UNDESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision. Datasets for the 2017 Revision available at: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml> (UNDESA, 2017a).

Figure 3.4 shows that while the total number of South Asian nationals living abroad has increased significantly, the number of migrant men is significantly higher than the number of migrant women, and appears to be growing, particularly since 2005. For example, in 1995, there were 3.19 million more male South Asian nationals living abroad than females. By 2017, however, there were 10.18 million more males living abroad than females (UNDESA, 2017a).

Figure 3.4

Stock of South Asian nationals living abroad, by sex, 1990 – 2017 (millions)



Source: UNDESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision. Datasets for the 2017 Revision available at <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml> (UNDESA, 2017a).

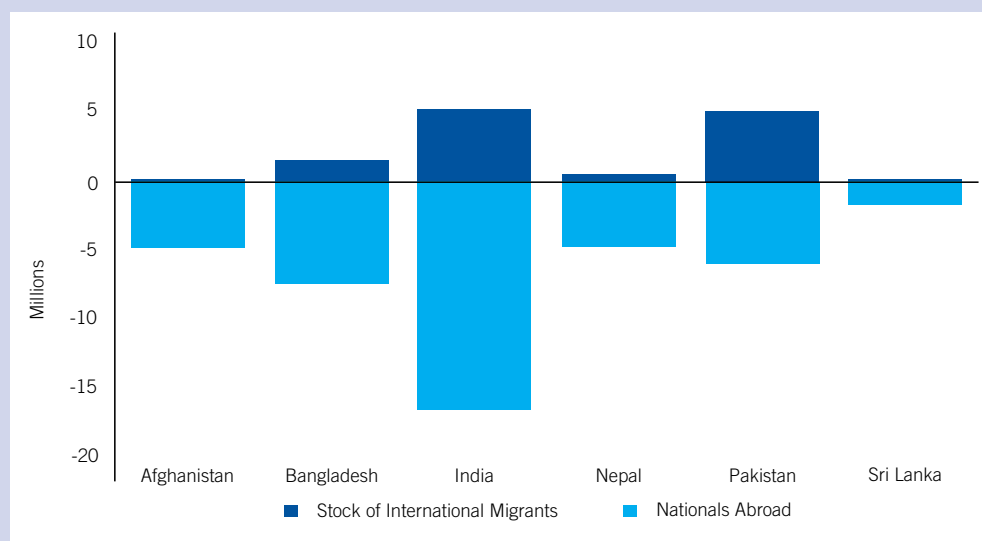
3.2.3 Comparing international migrants in South Asia with South Asian nationals abroad

The South Asian subregion serves overwhelmingly as an origin of international migrants who move outside of the subregion, particularly to the Middle East, and also to destinations in South-East Asia, Europe and North America.²³ However, two countries in particular – India and Pakistan – are significant countries of origin, transit and destination. In fact, India and Pakistan had the twelfth- and eighteenth-largest international migrant populations in the world in 2017, respectively (UNDESA, 2017a). Maldives is the only country in the subregion that serves almost solely as a destination country for international migrants, for both South Asian nationals and citizens of countries outside of the subregion.

However, as figure 3.5 shows below, in six of eight South Asian countries, the population of nationals living abroad, including in India and Pakistan, greatly outnumbers the stock of international migrants. Four of the eight South Asian countries also featured in the world's top 20 origin countries of international migrants in 2017, including India (first), Bangladesh (fifth), Pakistan (seventh) and Afghanistan (eleventh) (UNDESA, 2017a). The stock of international migrants outnumbered the stock of nationals abroad in only two South Asian countries in 2017 – Maldives and Bhutan. In Maldives, the population of international migrants in 2017 was just over 67,000, while the number of Maldivian nationals living abroad was less than 3,000. In Bhutan, the stock of international migrants in 2017 exceeded 52,000, while the number of Bhutanese nationals living abroad was less than 44,000 (UNDESA, 2017a).

Figure 3.5

Stock of international migrants and stock of nationals living abroad, selected South Asian countries, 2017 (millions)



Source: UNDESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision. Datasets for the 2017 Revision available at <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml> (UNDESA, 2017a).

23. UNDESA employs the use of the term 'Northern America'. However, in this report, this region will be designated with the name, 'North America'.

Given that the combined stock of South Asian nationals living abroad greatly outnumbers the stock of international migrants in the subregion, it is clear that a majority of the subregion's international migrants are not migrating intraregionally, but rather extraregionally. For those international migrants who do live in South Asia, an overwhelming majority originate from other South Asian countries. As of 2017, over 83.5 per cent of the subregion's total international migrant population were South Asian (UNDESA, 2017a).

Table 3.1 shows the top ten destination countries of South Asian nationals living abroad in 2017. For half of the countries (four of eight), the top country of destination of nationals living abroad was another country in the subregion. For two of eight countries, Saudi Arabia was the primary country of destination (Pakistan and Sri Lanka). The primary destination countries outside of the South Asian subregion were primarily located in the Middle East (particularly GCC states), Western Europe and North America, with Australia and Malaysia being the notable exceptions.

Table 3.1
Top 10 destination countries of South Asian nationals living abroad in 2017

Afghanistan	Stock	Bangladesh	Stock	Bhutan	Stock	India	Stock
Iran	2 348 607	India	3 139 311	Nepal	28 334	UAE	3 310 419
Pakistan	1 515 738	Saudi Arabia	1 157 072	India	6 580	United States	2 307 909
Saudi Arabia	435 810	UAE	1 044 505	Australia	4 014	Saudi Arabia	2 266 216
Germany	99 973	Kuwait	381 669	Canada	2 569	Pakistan	1 873 650
United Kingdom	80 160	Malaysia	365 600	Denmark	704	Oman	1 201 995
United States	72 909	Oman	276 518	Norway	396	Kuwait	1 157 072
Canada	47 605	United Kingdom	228 353	United Kingdom	379	United Kingdom	836 524
Australia	39 297	United States	219 021	Netherlands	328	Qatar	658 488
Netherlands	35 346	Qatar	163 386	Sri Lanka	233	Canada	602 146
Sweden	31 628	Italy	98 743	Belgium	114	Nepal	440 198
Maldives	Stock	Nepal	Stock	Pakistan	Stock	Sri Lanka	Stock
Sri Lanka	1 409	India	537 517	Saudi Arabia	1 343 737	Saudi Arabia	479 391
Australia	564	Saudi Arabia	455 905	India	1 095 149	India	153 643
United Kingdom	329	Malaysia	209 121	UAE	950 145	Canada	153 625
India	197	Qatar	154 340	United Kingdom	529 324	United Kingdom	138 904
South Africa	92	United States	103 970	USA	370 353	Australia	117 550
Switzerland	67	United Kingdom	70 487	Kuwait	340 481	UAE	114 911
Russian Federation	45	Bangladesh	39 988	Oman	218 522	Italy	86 589
Seychelles	38	Australia	34 464	Canada	159 131	Qatar	55 825
Italy	34	UAE	26 595	Qatar	135 876	United States	52 054
Egypt	27	Kuwait	24 713	Singapore	133 306	France	48 591

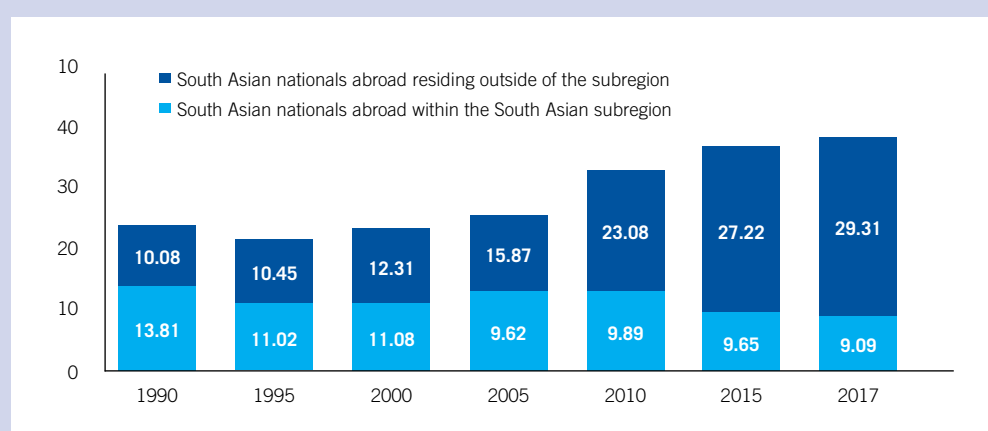
Source: UNDESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision. Datasets for the 2017 Revision available at <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml> (UNDESA, 2017a).

India stands out as one of the primary destinations of South Asian nationals abroad from all other countries in the subregion except Afghanistan. However, it is important to mention that large stocks of international migrants living in countries like India and Pakistan may reflect long-term migrants as a result of historical events such as the 1947 partition, which led to the displacement of millions of people to and from India and Pakistan (IOM, 2017).

Figure 3.6 reflects the continued change in intraregional versus extraregional dynamics with a focus solely on South Asian nationals abroad, both within and outside of the subregion, in absolute numbers over a 27-year period.

Figure 3.6

South Asian nationals living abroad within the South Asian subregion vs. South Asian nationals living outside of the subregion, 1990 – 2017 (millions)



Source: UNDESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision. Datasets for the 2017 Revision available at <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml> (UNDESA, 2017a).

These same trends are also reflected in both male and female South Asians abroad, with the South Asia – South Asia international migrant population of females decreasing from 6.6 million in 1990 to 4.49 million in 2017, and the South Asia – South Asia international migrant population of males decreasing from 7.2 million in 1990 to 4.61 million in 2017 (UNDESA, 2017a).

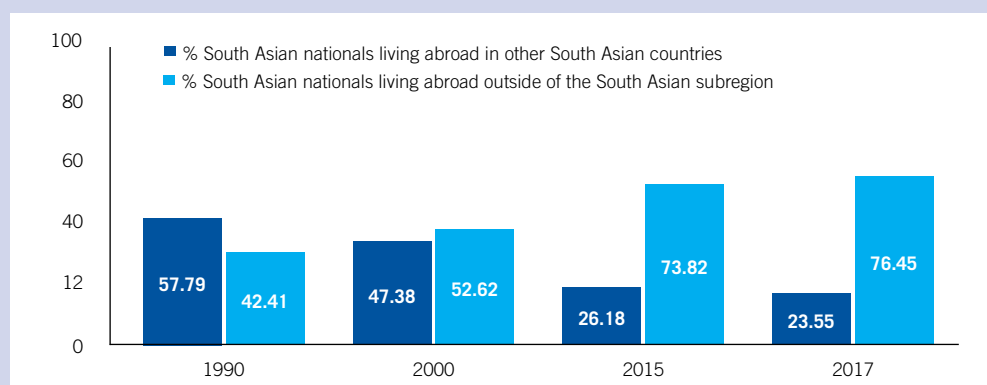
Figure 3.7 reflects total intraregional versus extraregional stocks of South Asian nationals abroad but as a proportion of the total for four separate reference years – with 42 per cent living outside of the subregion in 1990 to over 76 per cent in 2017, and the stock of nationals abroad within the subregion decreasing from 58 per cent in 1990 to roughly 23.5 per cent in 2017.

A large majority of South Asian nationals abroad are hosted in developing countries and regions. In 2017, the total stock of South Asian nationals abroad (including in other South Asian countries) in ‘developing regions’ – which per UNDESA encompasses any countries located outside of Europe, North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand (UNDESA, 2017b) – was 30 million, with 29.9 million South Asian nationals residing in Asia.²⁴ In the same year, a total of

24. It is worth noting that ‘Asia’ includes GCC countries, which fall within the ‘Western Asia’ subregion in UNDESA classifications.

Figure 3.7

Proportion of South Asian nationals living abroad within the subregion vs. outside of the subregion, 1990, 2000, 2015, and 2017 (%)



Source: UNDESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision. Datasets for the 2017 Revision available at <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml> (UNDESA, 2017a).

8.4 million South Asian nationals were living in ‘developed regions’ – considered all countries in North America and Europe, as well as Japan, Australia and New Zealand (UNDESA, 2017b).²⁵

Table 3.2 lists the top ten destination countries outside of South Asia of South Asian nationals for 1990 and 2017. Nine of the top ten destination countries have remained the same between the

Table 3.2

Top 10 destination of South Asian nationals living outside of South Asia, 1990 and 2017

1990		2017	
Iran	3 134 697	Saudi Arabia	6 138 131
Saudi Arabia	2 487 058	UAE	5 454 388
UAE	819 653	United States	3 126 216
United Kingdom	771 593	Iran	2 353 001
Kuwait	671 008	Kuwait	1 946 680
United States	608 437	United Kingdom	1 884 460
Oman	252 266	Oman	1 169 517
Canada	224 855	Canada	1 027 476
Germany	136 028	Malaysia	744 741
Australia	128 090	Australia	689 734

Note: Nearly all South Asian nationals living in Iran in 1990 originated from Afghanistan.

Source: UNDESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision. Datasets for the 2017 Revision available at <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml> (UNDESA, 2017a).

25. Countries such as Malaysia, as well as GCC Member States, are considered ‘developing’ per UNDESA’s classifications. UNDESA specifies that the “developed regions” and “developing regions” “are intended for statistical convenience and do not necessarily express a judgment about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process” (UNDESA, 2017b).

two reference years, with Germany being the only destination country outside of the subregion that featured in the top ten in 1990, but not in 2017. Malaysia, on the other hand, featured in the top ten destination countries located outside of the subregion in 2017, and not in 1990.

In 2017, 44.3 per cent of South Asian nationals abroad were living in Western Asian countries,²⁶ while another 10.8 per cent were living in North America and 8.9 per cent were in Europe. South-East Asia was the destination of a smaller yet notable population of South Asian migrants (3.3 per cent), while 2 per cent were living in Oceania (UNDESA, 2017a).

3.3 South Asian migrant flows

UNDESA also compiles a dataset on international migrant flows. Flow data for UNDESA begin in 2005 and have steadily grown to encompass 45 total countries as of 2015 (UNDESA, 2015c; UNDESA, 2015d). However, the ability to conduct trends analysis with UNDESA flow data is limited, particularly as the total number of countries/territories/areas included in the dataset have changed over time (IOM, 2017). Additionally, UNDESA notes that countries that publish flow data employ different definitions of international migrants and different methods to determine origin and destination countries of international migrants (UNDESA, 2015c). Finally, the 2015 revision of UNDESA flow data only encompasses a reference period of between 2005 and 2013.

OECD also captures migrant flow data published in an online database that spans a longer period – from 2000 to 2016 – for its Member countries, and thus allows limited trends analysis over time (IOM, 2017). Flow data reflects annual permanent inflows of foreign nationals into OECD Member countries.²⁷

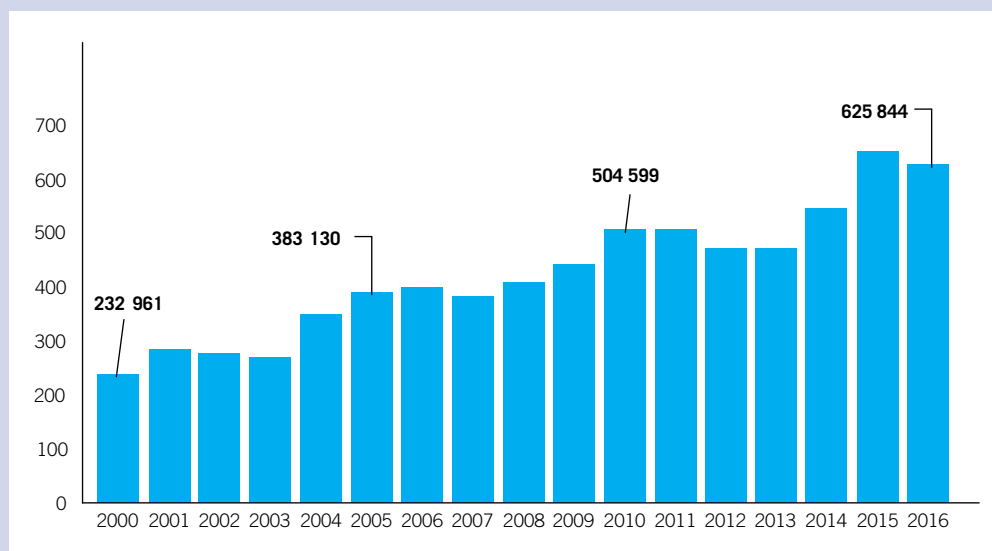
Figure 3.8 shows the aggregate permanent immigrant inflows of South Asian nationals to OECD Member countries between 2000 and 2016.²⁸ Overall, despite periodic decreases in the annual inflows of South Asians, the overall inflows of South Asian nationals to OECD Member countries has continued to increase between 2000 and 2016 – for example, in the year 2000, nearly 233,000 South Asians migrated to OECD countries. By 2015, that number had almost tripled to nearly 645,000 South Asians migrating to OECD countries, although that number decreased slightly to just under 626,000 in 2016 (OECD, n.d.a.).

26. The subregion 'Western Asia' as defined by UNDESA, encompasses the following countries: Bahrain, Cyprus, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestinian Territory, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen (UNDESA, 2017a).

27. Though migration of South Asian migrants to OECD countries is prominent, high-income non-OECD countries still possess a larger share of the global population of South Asian nationals living abroad than OECD countries.

28. Permanent immigrant inflows cover regulated movements of foreigners considered to be settling in the country from the perspective of the destination country. These movements may or may not include migrants who are moving temporarily (or non-permanently) to destination countries – e.g. for temporary contract labour – depending on the specific definitional and methodological constraints employed in each particular country of destination.

Figure 3.8

**Inflows of South Asian nationals into OECD countries, permanent migration, 2000 – 2016
(in thousands)²⁹**


Note 1: The 35 countries typically included in OECD statistics are the following: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States.

Note 2: Permanent immigrant inflows cover regulated movements of foreigners considered to be settling in the country from the perspective of the destination country. They cover regulated movements of foreigners as well as free movement migration. The data presented are the result of a standardization process that allows for cross-country comparisons. This indicator is measured by numbers of permanent inflows.

Source: OECD International Migration Database (accessed on 12 July 2018). Dataset available from <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=MIG>. (OECD, n.d.a.).

The largest inflows of Indian nationals to OECD countries in 2016 were to United States at over 64,000, followed by Canada and Australia. The largest inflows of Nepali nationals to OECD countries in 2016 were to Japan at over 14,000, followed closely by United States, and then the Republic of Korea (with over 8,700). The Republic of Korea was the primary OECD destination country of Sri Lankan migrants, with inflows exceeding 7,000 in 2016 (followed by Japan and Italy), while United States, Italy and Canada were the largest destinations of migrant flows to OECD countries of Bangladeshi nationals in 2016.³⁰ The largest permanent inflows of Afghan nationals in 2016 to OECD countries were to Germany with nearly 76,000.

29. At the time this report was composed, only inflows data through 2016 had been published by the OECD.

30. Inflows of Maldivian and Bhutanese migrants to OECD countries were minimal in 2016, with the exception of Bhutanese migrants to United States, which numbered over 4,200.

Box 3.1**Return migration**

While the positive impacts of return migration can vary greatly depending on a variety of labour and socioeconomic factors – including the individual migrant’s duration of migration, motive of return and individual profile – South Asian migrants who return to their countries of origin may bring with them new skills, experiences and qualifications, as well as the possibility for stronger business networks. From an economic standpoint, those returnees who are successful in attaining additional capital savings in destination countries may use these to buy assets in their respective countries of origin, or to invest in new businesses. Finally, migrants may also gain more intangible and intrinsic attributes and characteristics back from abroad, including norms and attitudes, which can subsequently be transferred to origin communities.^a

However, in addition to the possible positive outcomes of return migration on countries of origin, return migrants can also face a range of issues, particularly in the realms of economic and social reintegration. For example, return migrants may lack crucial information on business trends, advisory services and job opportunities. Despite the myriad of challenges that return migrants face, these issues are often the least explored in migrant literature.^b

Accurate data on return migration – including method of return (whether voluntary or forced) or repeat and circular migrants – is essential for policy-makers to predict and plan for its potential political, economic and social impacts on origin countries – e.g. in areas of unemployment and health services. Despite the social and political importance of return migration, there are limited data on migrant returns produced by South Asian countries, representing a significant gap in migration statistics collected not only in the subregion, but around the world.^c However, the call for improved data collection on return migration has emanated from a number of countries in South Asia. Sri Lanka, for example, in outlining its commitment to recognizing “the contribution made by migrant workers and facilitate their return and reintegration with opportunities for skills transfer, productive employment and conflict-free social integration” in its 2008 National Labour Migration Policy, specifically emphasizes the need for a “national and de-centralized database” that “includes data on returnees” and is updated frequently online.^d

Further discussion on dynamics of return migration in the South Asian context, as well as limitations in return migrant data collection, can be found in Section 4 of this report.

Note: the above is a very general discussion of return migration. Other reports, such as Sharma et. al., 2015, cover return migration and related thematic areas in South Asia in more depth. Readers are encouraged to reference this and other reports for further information.

Sources:

a ILO, 2015a.

b Sharma et. al., 2015.

c Doherty et. al., 2014.

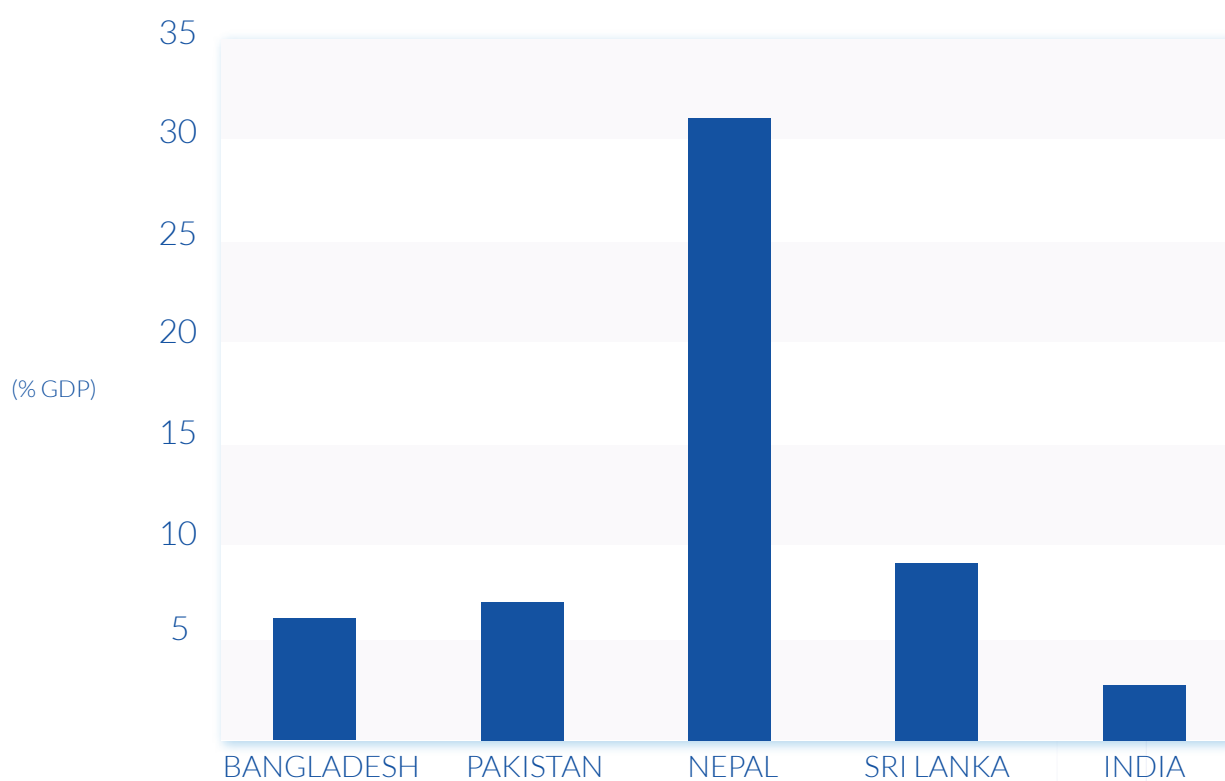
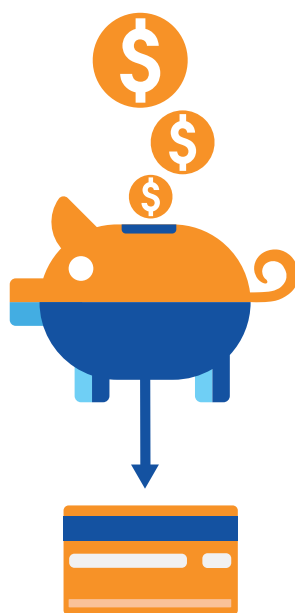
d Sri Lankan Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare, 2008.



Personal remittances received as a proportion of the GDP



International
Labour
Organization



Source : The World Bank, Net ODA received (current US\$), available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DI.ODA.ODAT.CD>. Accessed 9 November, 2017.

3.4 Remittances and external financial flows to South Asia

3.4.1 Overview of remittances to South Asia

Remittances are usually understood as financial or in-kind transfers made by migrants to families or communities in countries of origin (IOM, 2017) (See Appendix I for additional definitions for key concepts utilized throughout the present report). According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), “remittances include cash and noncash items that flow through formal channels, such as via electronic wire, or through informal channels”, and can be sent by individuals who have either migrated and become residents of their respective destination countries, or those funds and noncash items “sent by short-term workers who are employed in an economy in which they are not residents” (IMF, 2009).³¹

South Asia is the second-highest remittance-receiving region in the world after East Asia and the Pacific, with recorded remittances consistently far out-numbering official development assistance (ODA) as well as foreign direct investment (FDI) (Ozaki, 2012).³² Remittances are seen as having a large impact on South Asian economies, helping to reduce poverty rates, while also providing a valuable source of foreign currency. In 2016 alone, South Asia received over US\$110 billion in remittances (World Bank, n.d.a.). India was the top remittance-receiving country in the world in 2016, while Pakistan ranked as the seventh largest recipient of remittances, and Bangladesh ranked as the tenth largest (World Bank, n.d.a.).³³ In South Asia, remittance inflows are supporting the balance of payments, and in many South Asian countries, remittances are actually larger than foreign exchange reserves. In India, remittances have been shown to outnumber the earnings from IT exports (World Bank, 2013).

The following section presents remittances data collected by the World Bank, which releases annual global-level estimates based on balance-of-payment data provided by the IMF.³⁴ However, the true size of remittances is likely far greater than the numbers reported, due to the large volume of inward remittance flows that go unrecorded, both through formal and informal channels (World Bank, 2016). In fact, some studies indicate that informal remittances could account for 42 per cent of total remittance inflows to South Asia, ranging from 16 per cent in India to 55 per cent in Nepal (Ozaki, 2012). Additionally, about two-thirds of remittances recipients in the South Asian subregion have reported the use of informal channels in order to make transfers (Kendall et. al., 2013; World Bank, 2013). There are multiple methods of sending money through informal channels. Often, funds and noncash items can be sent informally by

31. It is worth noting that various countries may conceptualize remittances and their definition in slightly different ways, including in South Asia. However, as a recognized global producer of data relied upon by the World Bank and others to measure global remittances flows, the IMF definition is employed in this report.

32. Unless otherwise specified, the rest of this discussion and the remittances data therein will refer to recorded remittances. It is important to take into account that data over time may be influenced by changes and improvements in reporting mechanisms, as well as changes in the dynamics of remittance flows through formal vs. non-formal channels.

33. According to World Bank Migration and Remittances Data, available from:

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data>, [accessed 11 July 2018].

34. The content of much of this subsection, unless otherwise noted, is based on and drawn from the World Bank’s data in relation to migration and remittances, available from here:

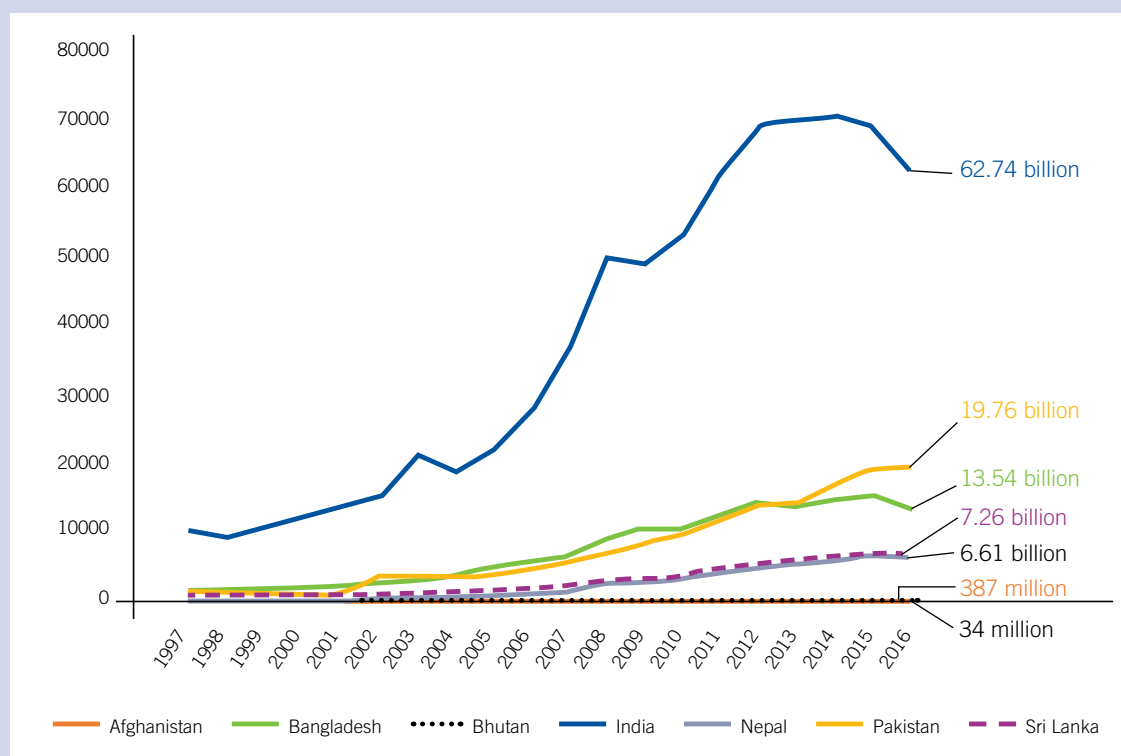
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data> [accessed 11 July 2018] (World Bank, n.d.a). Please refer to this source, as well as the World Bank’s Factbooks on Migration and Development, for explanatory notes, deeper analysis, caveats, limitations and methodologies.

being physically carried across borders (IMF, 2009). This is particularly the case in South Asia, where short-term migrant workers and migrant entrepreneurs are frequently moving between migrant labour origin and destination countries, and often physically carrying cash from remitters with them (Rahman and Yeoh, 2014).

Total remittance inflows to South Asia have increased substantially over the past 20 years. India by far receives the largest inflows of remittances of all South Asian countries, and the total grew from US\$10.3 billion in 1997 to US\$62.7 billion in 2016. Pakistan received the second-largest volume of remittance inflows of South Asian countries with nearly US\$20 billion in 2016, followed by Bangladesh (US\$13.5 billion), Sri Lanka (US\$7.3 billion) and Nepal (US\$6.6 billion) (see figure 3.9 below) (World Bank, n.d.a.). As the three countries with the largest inflows of remittances in South Asia, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh also have the largest stocks of nationals living abroad.

Figure 3.9

Personal remittance inflows (US\$ millions), South Asian countries, 1997 – 2016³⁵



Note: At the time this publication was written only provisional data for 2017 were available. As such, they have not been included in the report.

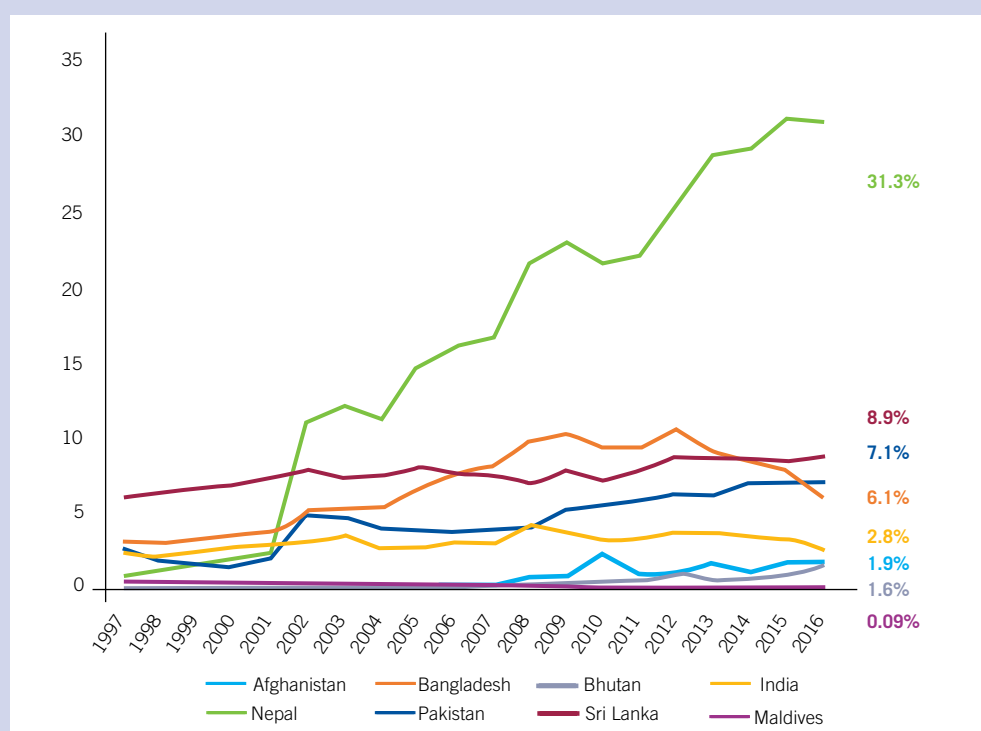
Source: World Bank Remittance Outflows and Inflows Data:

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data> [accessed 11 July 2018] (World Bank, n.d.a).

Figure 3.10 reflects remittances received as a percentage of each South Asian country's total GDP. Nepal's is the highest by far, constituting 31.3 per cent of total GDP in 2016. This proportion has been growing almost every year since 1997, when recorded remittances accounted for only

35. Due to constraints of visualization, Maldives is excluded from figure 3.9; however, remittances inflows to the country ranged from between US\$2 and US\$8 million between 1997 and 2016.

1 per cent of the country's total GDP. Sri Lanka receives the second-largest remittance inflows as a percentage of GDP of all South Asian countries (8.9 per cent in 2016), although it has remained relatively constant over time, hovering between 6 and 9 per cent of the country's GDP for the past 20 years. After peaking at 10.6 per cent of the country's GDP in 2012, remittance inflows as a percentage of GDP in Bangladesh have continued to drop, to 6.1 per cent in 2016. Although remittances inflows to India are the highest of all countries in the subregion in terms of absolute United States Dollars, remittances as a percentage of the country's GDP are far lower, at around 2.8 per cent in 2016 (World Bank, n.d.a.). However, remittances inflows can constitute a much larger percentage of total GDP at a state level. In India, for example, remittance inflows as a percentage of GDP are significantly higher than the national average in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh (Tumbe, 2011). Recorded remittances constitute a very small proportion of total GDP in Afghanistan, Bhutan and Maldives.

Figure 3.10**Personal remittances received (per cent of GDP), South Asia, 1997 - 2016**

Note: At the time this publication was written final data for 2017 were available. However, in order to allow comparison and to maintain uniformity only data up through 2016 have been included. For 2017 data on personal remittances received (per cent of GDP), please reference the link in the source below.

Source: World Bank Remittance Outflows and Inflows Data:

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data> [accessed 11 July 2018] (World Bank, n.d.a.)

3.4.2 Remittances, Net ODA and FDI

Comparing remittance inflows to South Asian countries with two other prominent forms of external financial flows – net ODA and FDI – provides a snapshot of remittances' size and scale

when compared to other financial sources that also carry development potential for receiving countries.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is defined by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) as financial aid “provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies” that is “administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries” (OECD, n.d.b.) (See Appendix I for additional definitions).³⁶

Development economists, governments and political leaders have become increasingly interested in the role of remittances as a development tool, particularly as global remittances inflows far outnumber global net ODA. Additionally, remittances at a global level tend to be far more stable than inflows of other external financial flows, such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) – defined as “an investment involving a long-term relationship and reflecting a lasting interest and control by a resident entity in one economy (foreign direct investor or parent enterprise) in an enterprise resident in an economy other than that of the foreign direct investor (UNCTAD, 2012).”

The following subsection draws on net ODA data available from OECD³⁷, as well as World Bank data on FDI based on the IMF’s balance-of-payments (BoP) database, and supplemented by data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and official national sources (World Bank, n.d.b.).

In 2016, total inflows of remittances to South Asia were US\$110.34 billion. On the other hand, total net ODA to the subregion amounted to just over US\$13.7 billion (World Bank, n.d.c.). When calculating total net inflows of FDI to all South Asian countries, 2016 saw an inflow of a substantial US\$50.8 billion. However, it is important to note that the lion’s share of FDI inflows that year were to India, which received US\$44.5 billion, or roughly 87.6 per cent of the subregion’s total 2016 FDI inflows. Even so, and despite the large inflows of FDI to India in 2016, remittances inflows still far out-numbered FDI to India that year.

Remittances inflows far exceeded both net ODA and FDI inflows to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and Nepal. FDI only exceeded inflows of net ODA and remittances in Maldives, where foreigners are allowed to own land and there is an “open and liberal economic environment” (Santander Bank S.A., n.d.). At the same time, the number of Maldivian migrants living abroad is minimal, thus reducing the potential for large remittance inflows to the country. Net ODA exceeded inflows of FDI and remittances in Afghanistan³⁸ and Bhutan, although the net ODA inflows to both of these countries appears to have decreased rather substantially in recent

36. ODA is inherently “concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 per cent” (OECD, n.d.b.). The term “net ODA” implies the “gross ODA minus loan repayments, repaid grants and proceeds on the sale of ODA-eligible equity investments”. ODA can be provided through numerous methods, including through grants and loan-based assistance, and is delivered through multiple channels, including from governments to NGOs and public-private partnerships (PPPs). A vast majority of global ODA originates from DAC member countries.

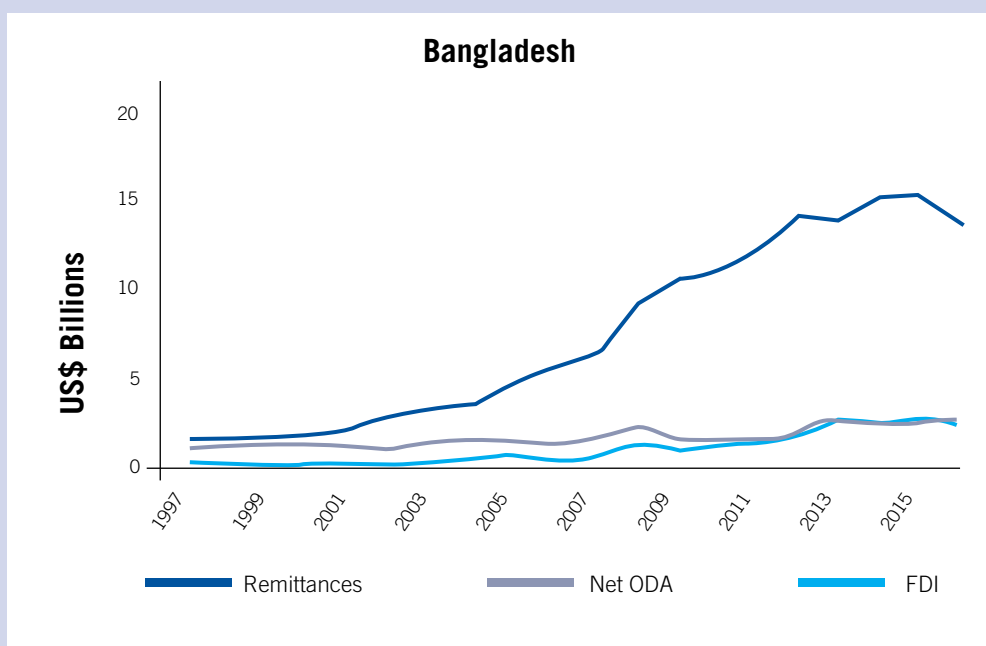
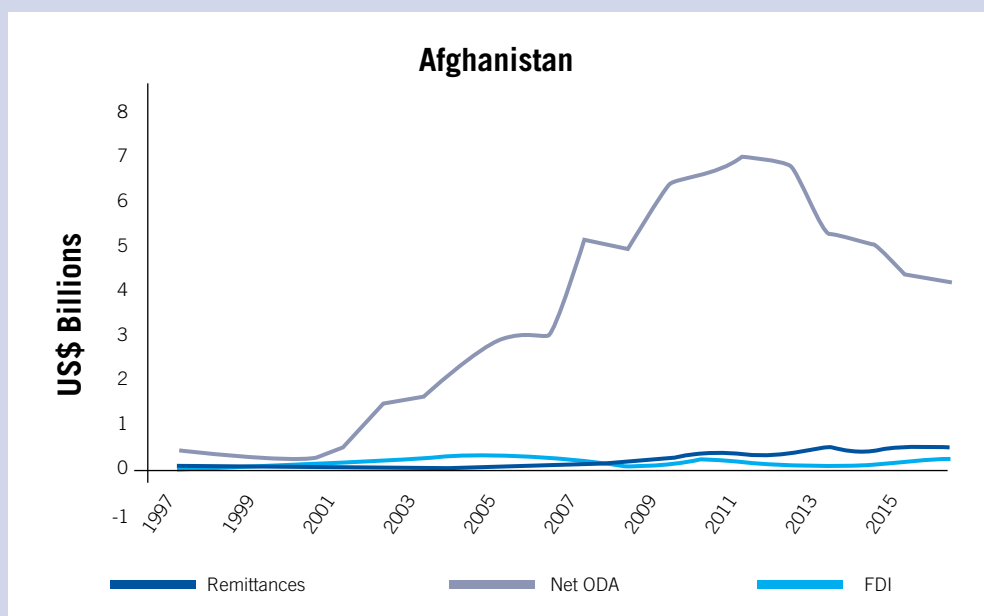
37. The OECD maintains a list of developing countries and territories. Only aid to these countries counts as ODA. For additional notes on data scope, methodology and caveats, see OECD net ODA data, available at <https://data.oecd.org/oda/net-oda.htm>.

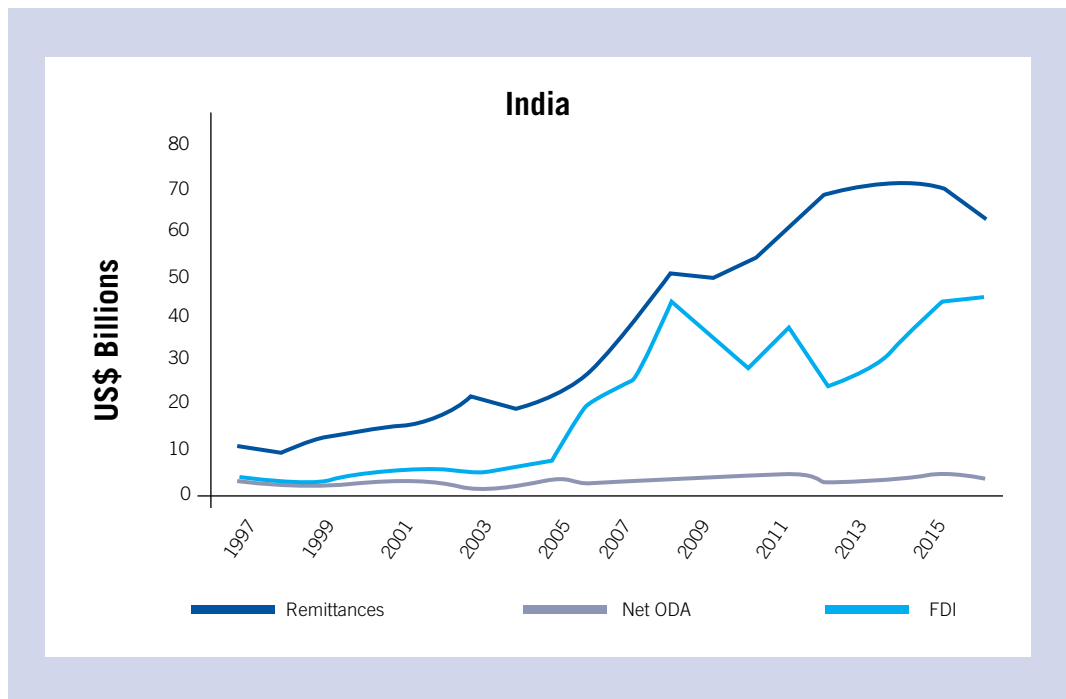
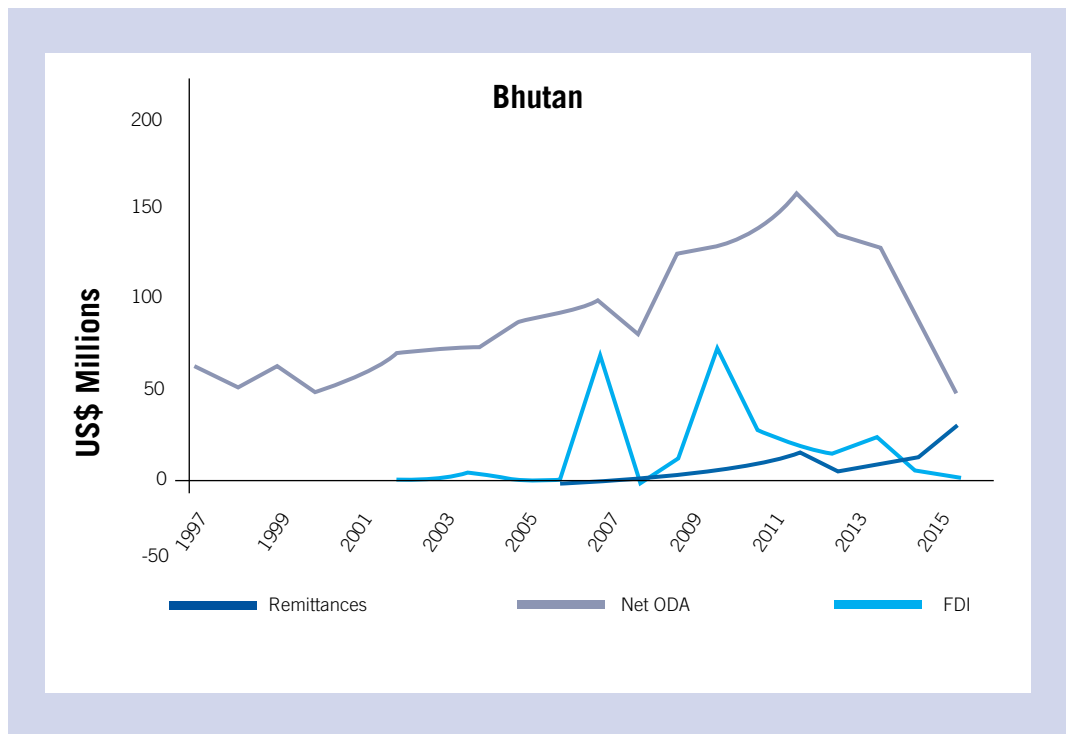
38. Particularly in Afghanistan, informal value transfer systems known as hawalas are an important method for Afghan migrant workers abroad – particularly in neighbouring countries like the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan – to send remittances back to Afghanistan. As such, it is likely that remittance inflows reported by Balance of Payment reporting vastly underestimates the actual inflows of remittances to the country (IOM, 2014).

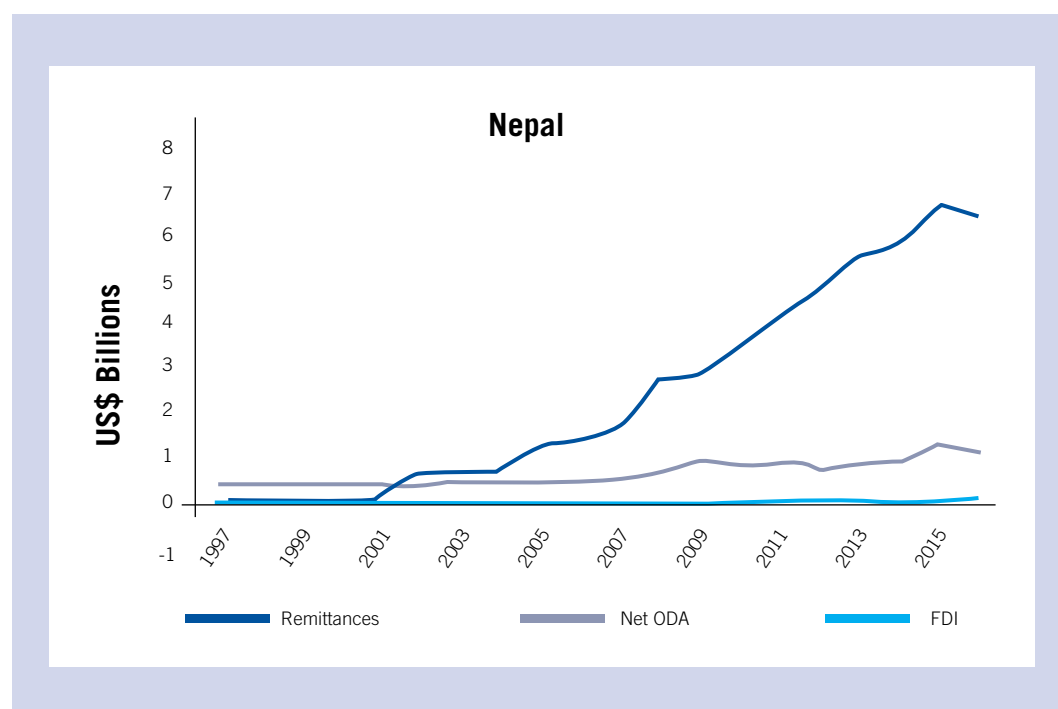
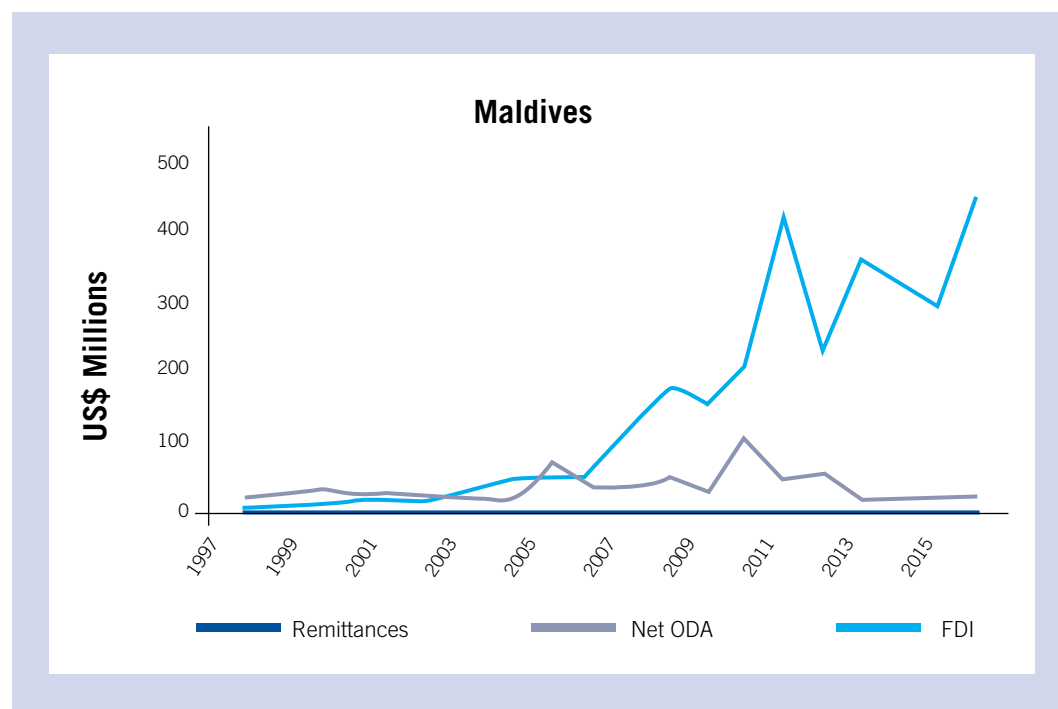
years. Figure 3.11 below compares absolute inflows in total US dollars of all three forms of external financial flows to the eight South Asian countries. For complete datasets for net ODA and FDI net inflows to South Asia, see Appendix III.

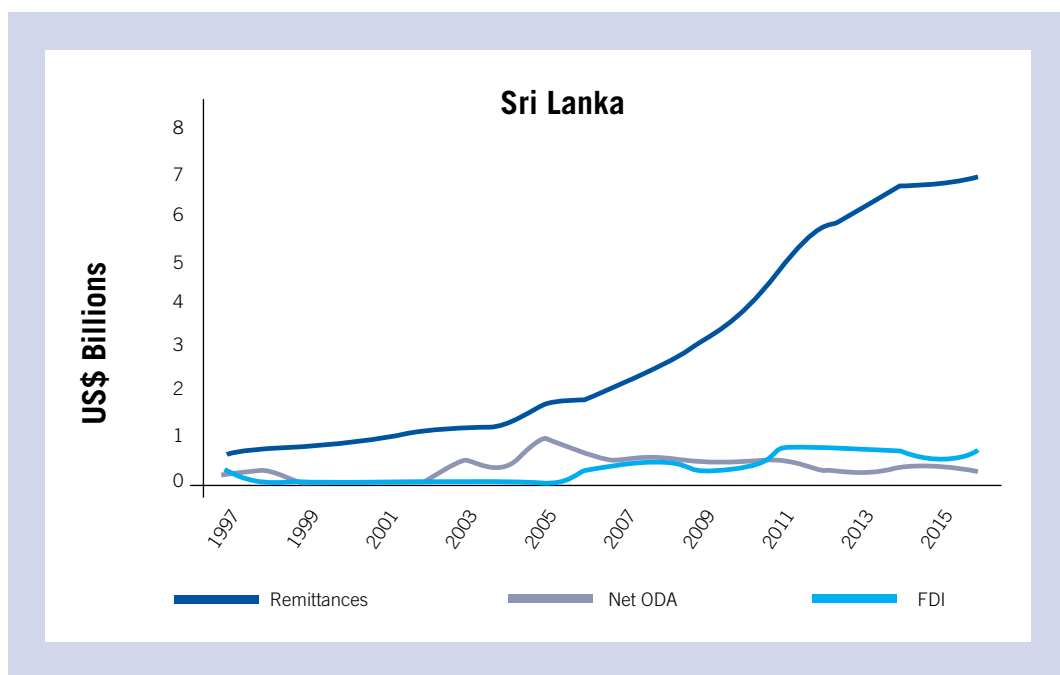
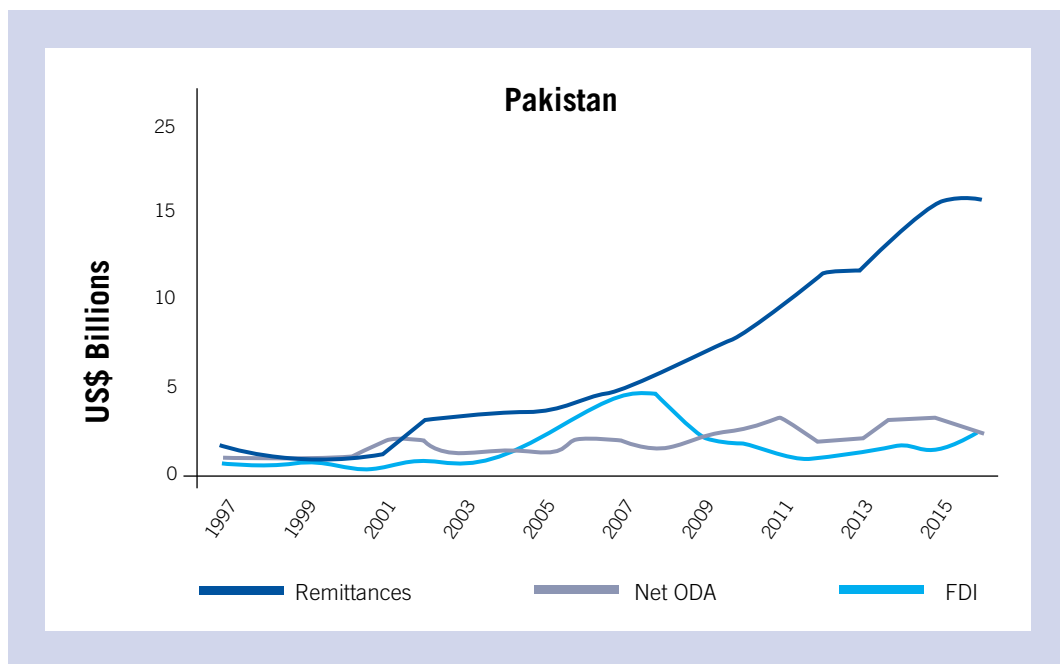
Figure 3.11

Personal remittance inflows, vs. net ODA and official aid, vs. FDI net inflows (BoP), (US\$ millions/billions), South Asia, 1997 – 2016









Source 1: The World Bank, Remittances (inflows), available from <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data>. Accessed 11 July 2018 (World Bank, n.d.a).

Source 2: The World Bank, Net ODA received (current US\$), available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.CD>. Accessed 11 July 2018 (World Bank, n.d.c).

Source 3: The World Bank, FDI, net inflows (BoP, current US\$), available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.CD.WD>. Accessed 11 July 2018 (World Bank, n.d.b).

3.4.3 Remittance transaction costs to South Asian origin countries

As earlier statistics in this report have shown, a larger population of migrants living abroad appears to often correlate to larger inflows of total remittances to countries of origin. However,

while remittances may depend positively on the number of nationals abroad from any given country of origin, remittances have been found to respond negatively to higher transfer costs and exchange rate restrictions in countries of destination (Freund and Spatafora, 2008).

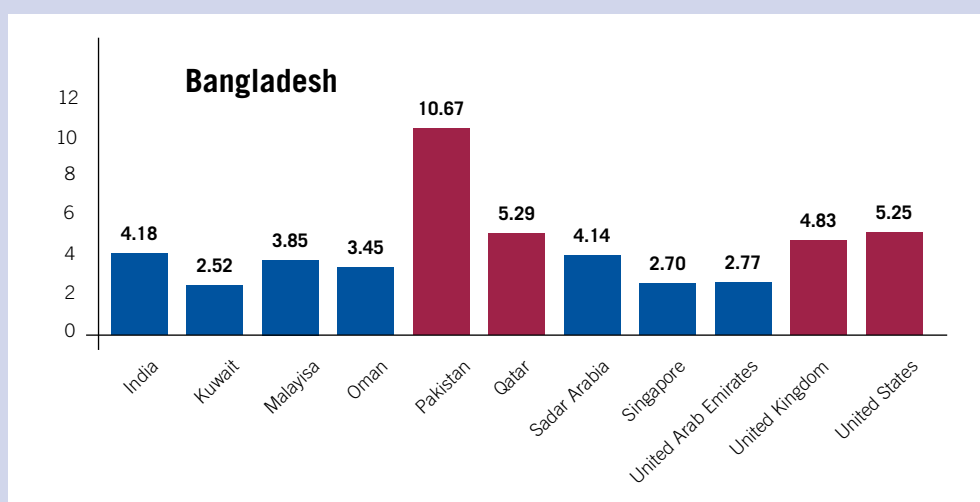
The World Bank's Remittance Prices Worldwide (RPW) tool,³⁹ launched in September 2008, provides a comprehensive source of data that monitors the "costs incurred by remitters when sending money along major remittance corridors" (World Bank, 2017). As of the second quarter of 2016, the RPW covered 48 remittance-sending countries and 105 remittance-receiving countries worldwide – including six of eight South Asian countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka).

Interestingly, South Asia **remains the region with the lowest transaction costs in the world**, with an average cost of just 5.4 per cent as of Quarter 1, 2017. Sub-Saharan Africa, on the other hand, had the highest average remittance transaction cost at 9.81 per cent as of Quarter 1, 2017 (World Bank, 2017). Figure 3.12 shows the average total cost by percentage when transferring US\$200 from selected countries of destination to selected countries in South Asia between Quarter 3, 2016 – Quarter 3, 2017.

Overall, remitters in GCC countries typically pay less in remittance transaction costs to South Asian countries when compared to remitters in Western Europe (such as Switzerland and the United Kingdom) and in North America (United States and Canada). Remittances sent from East and South-East Asia tended to be more varied. All columns reflecting corridors where the transaction cost (per cent of transfer) exceeds five per cent have been highlighted in Figure 3.12, to reflect the targets set out in international agendas, as described in Section 3.4.4.

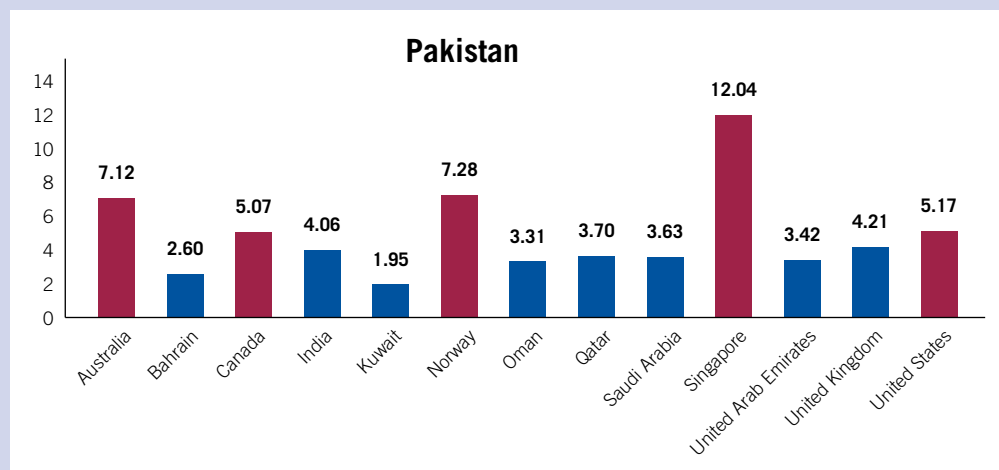
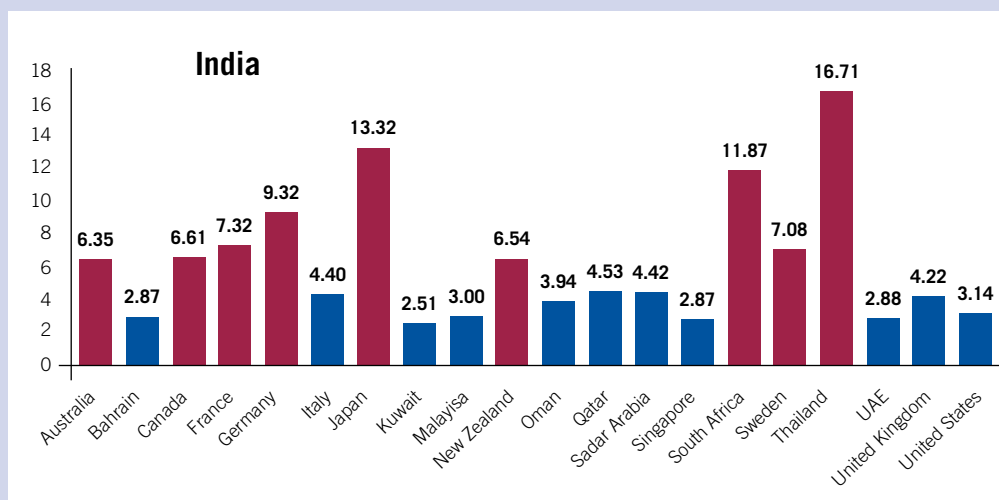
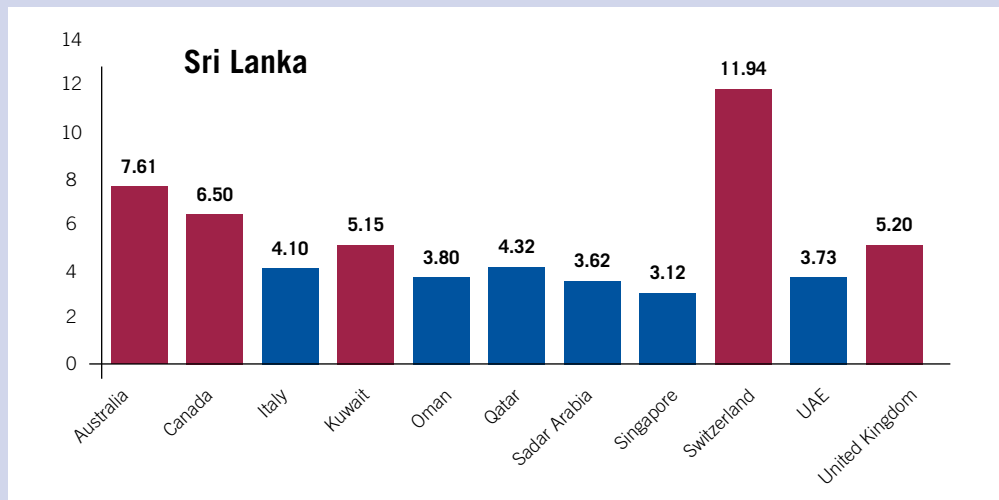
Figure 3.12

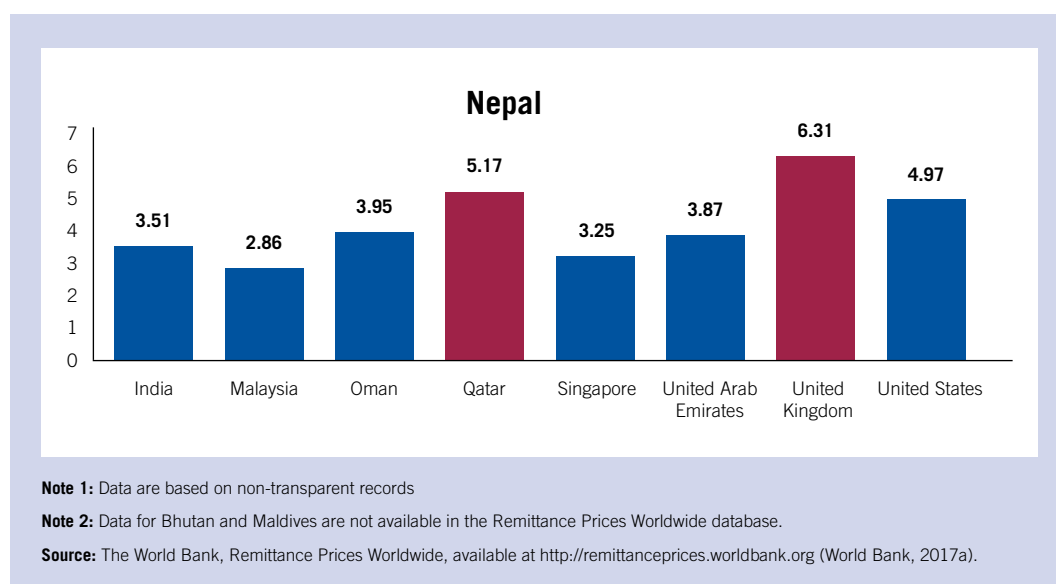
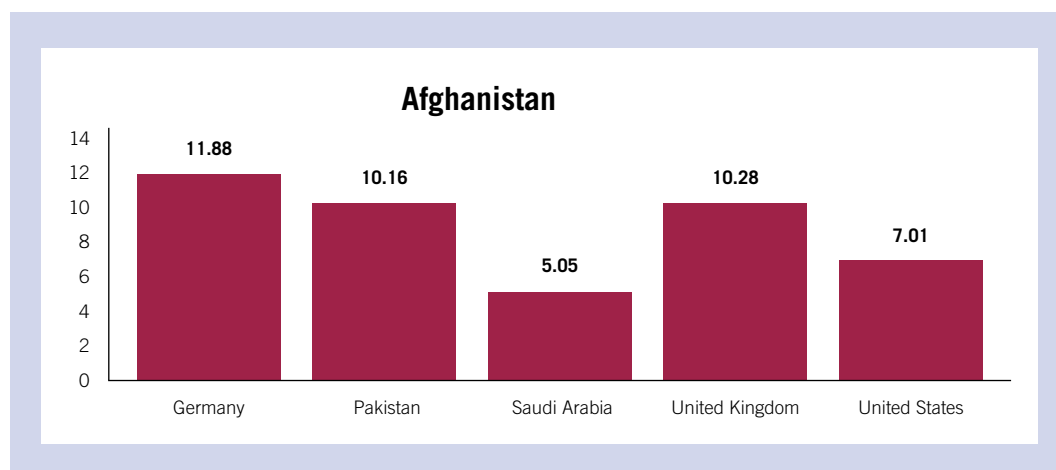
Average remittance transaction cost (per cent of transfer) for US\$200 transfer from selected migrant labour destination countries to selected South Asian countries (Q3 2016 – Q3 2017)⁴⁰ (including fees and exchange rate margins)



39. For information on the methodology used to calculate remittance transaction costs, see World Bank technical notes, available at https://remittanceprices.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/smart_methodology.pdf.

40. Destination countries selected in the below figures encompass those countries for which data were compiled and made available by the World Bank.





3.4.4 Remittances and the global policy agenda

As the previous discussion in Sections 3.4.1, 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 have shown, the size and scale of remittances to South Asia are considerable. However, although there is a relatively large availability of accurate and timely data on remittances both within South Asia and globally, more can certainly be done to produce and analyse relevant data on remittance flows and understand the effects of remittances outflows and inflows on migrant origin and destination countries. It is of great importance that policy-makers at the country, regional and global level harness the power of remittances by continuing to create ideal regulatory and investment frameworks, and in particular prioritizing remittance initiatives in various country, regional and global policy agendas. A number of international frameworks have already committed to better evidence-based policy-making on migration and remittances.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (4A), for example, expressed a particular commitment to facilitating the global policy framework on remittances, committing to ensuring that “adequate and affordable financial services are available to migrants and their families” (World Bank, 2015); to promote financial inclusion and literacy; to reducing the average

remittance transaction costs to less than three per cent and having no corridors that incur costs in excess of 5 per cent; and to promote cheaper, faster and safer transfers (World Bank, 2015). The 4A also commits to addressing various obstacles that impede remittances flows, such as “bank withdrawing services and obstacles to non-bank remittance service providers”, while “mitigating the potential impact of the anti-money laundering and the combating financing of terrorism standards on access to financial services” (World Bank, 2015).⁴¹

In 2011, the G20⁴² committed to “reducing the global average cost of sending remittances to 5 per cent (from 9.3 per cent in mid-2011)” (Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion, 2016), implementing a wide array of measures in member countries including: price comparison websites, initiatives to change financial infrastructures and address structural issues, promote access to digital services and establish consultative forums (Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion, 2016).

Finally, Goal 10, “reduce inequality within and among countries” within the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, specifically outlines a commitment to “reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent” in Target 10.c, relying on indicator 10.c.1- “remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted” (UNDESA, n.d.b.).

When analysing individual country-level remittance transaction costs presented in figure 3.12, there exist a number of remittance corridors in South Asia where costs still exceed 5 per cent – e.g. Pakistan, Qatar and United States to Bangladesh; Australia, Canada, Italy, Switzerland and United Kingdom to Sri Lanka; numerous remittance corridors between destination countries to India; Australia, Canada, Norway, Singapore and United States to Pakistan; Qatar and United Kingdom to Nepal; and all of those outlined between available destination countries to Afghanistan. At a subregional level, remittance transaction costs in South Asia have decreased substantially to 5.4 per cent, but still exceed the overall goal of less than three per cent outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the G20 Remittance Target and Goal 10.c of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

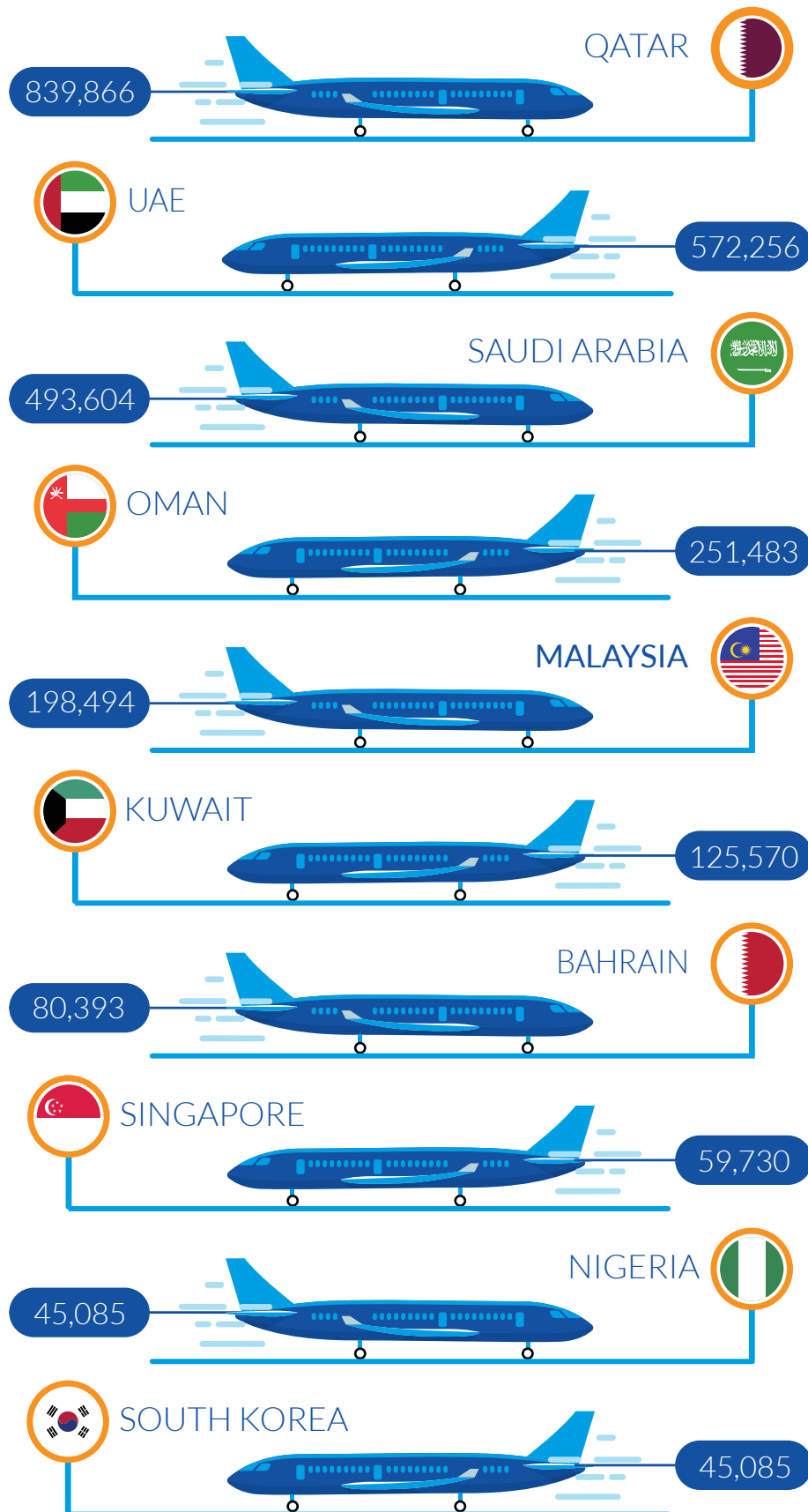
41. More information on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda can be found in the in the final outcome document, available at: http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf.

42. The G-20, or Group of Twenty, is an international forum for governments and central bank governors from twenty different countries. For a full list of its members, as well as additional information about its policy agenda, please reference the following link: <http://g20.org.tr/about-g20/g20-members/>.

TOP 10 DESTINATION COUNTRIES FOR SOUTH ASIAN MIGRANTS* (2014-2016)



International
Labour
Organization



*Number of recorded migrant workers from South Asian countries deployed between 2014 - 2016



04

PROFILE OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT WORKERS MOVING OUT OF SOUTH ASIA

4.1 Proposed definition of international migrant workers

Currently, there is no internationally agreed-upon statistical definition of an ‘international migrant worker’. This report utilizes the definition derived from the international instrument, the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Article 2(1) of the 1990 Convention defines the term 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” (UNTC, 1990). The 1949 ILO Convention on Migration for Employment (No. 97) defines a ‘migrant for employment’ as “a person who migrates from one country to another with a view to being employed otherwise than on his own account and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant for employment” (ILO, 1949).⁴³

From the legal definition of migrant worker provided in the 1990 Convention, the statistical measurement can be deduced from statistical standard of “international migrant”, defined as “any person who changes his or her country of usual residence” (UNDESA, 1998), in combination with the ILO definition of work statistics. Article 2(2) of the 1990 Convention determined specific groups that should be designated as migrant workers – namely frontier workers, seasonal workers, seafarers, workers on offshore installation, itinerant workers, project-tied migrant workers, self-employed migrant workers and other specified employment workers (UNTC, 1990). However, the Convention has provided the delimitation by excluding persons employed by international agencies or any persons whose work is regulated by international agreements, special regulated cooperation, or development programmes. The Convention also excludes refugees or resident investors from outside countries, students and seafarers offshore who are without approved residence (according to Article 3 of the convention) (UNTC, 1990).

In relation to the proposed statistical definition under consideration and still to be adopted by the ICLS, “An International migrant worker is defined as a person of working age who was in one of the following categories:

43. The definitional constraints of labour migration and associated terms are discussed in further detail in section 4.4.1. of this report.

a) International migrant who during a specified reference period was either in the labour force or in the potential labour force or engaged in any form of work in the country of his/her current usual residence.

b) Person who was not a resident of the country during the specified reference period but had in that country labour attachment as defined in: i) This group includes non-resident (working) refugees, (working) asylum seekers, cross-border workers, seasonal workers, itinerant workers, undocumented/irregular migrant workers, posted workers, volunteer workers, seafarers, workers on offshore installation” (ILO, forthcoming).

The typical reference period is usually within the last 12 months. This proposed statistical definition is still under discussion and is expected to be confirmed at the 20th ICLS in October 2018. It is important to mention that this proposed definition of migrant workers covers not only those migrants in remunerated activities, but also those involved in other forms of work, such as own-use production (ILO, 2013a).⁴⁴ The data aligned to this definition are expected in the few countries where migration modules and labour force modules are collected together in household surveys or population censuses.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that “while migrant workers are often also international migrants, not all are” (IOM GMDAC, n.d.), since international migrant stocks are primarily based on country of birth, while when defining migrant workers the emphasis is often placed on the person’s citizenship rather than country of birth (ILO and UNESCAP, 2015) – for example, a citizen of the country of residence who is working and was born in another country would not count as an international migrant worker because this individual had not moved in search of work, whereas the same individual would count as an international migrant since the country of birth is different from the country of residence (ILO and UNESCAP, 2015; IOM GMDAC, n.d.).

4.2 Brief overview of South Asian labour migration

In South Asia, labour migration occurs at both intraregional and extraregional levels, on both a temporary and permanent basis. For countries in South Asia with significant labour surpluses, out-migration of South Asian migrants for employment has helped to relieve labour market pressures, while migrant remittances from migrant workers in destination countries have assisted in poverty reduction back home.

Since the 1970s, the GCC countries have been a primary destination of temporary contract workers from South Asia, many of whom are employed in the construction sector and in domestic work. Initially, South Asian migrant workers to GCC countries originated primarily from India and Pakistan. However, labour migration flows have since diversified considerably, with large-scale labour migration occurring from Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh as well (IOM, 2017). At present, South Asians represent the largest population of migrant workers in GCC countries (Oommen, 2015).

44. At the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (2013), work has been defined as “any activity performed by persons of any age and sex to produce goods or to provide services for use” (Report II, *Statistics of Work Employment and Labour Underutilization*, ILO, 2013a), available from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_220535.pdf.

45. As an analytical report, this is not an exhaustive analysis of labour migration trends within and out of the subregion. For a more detailed analysis, see, for example: Srivastava and Pandey, 2017; Wickramasekara, 2011; Doherty et. al., 2014; ILO, 2016; GIZ and ILO, 2015.

The destinations of South Asian migrant workers departing the subregion have also diversified over time. Outside of GCC countries, a significant number of temporary migrant workers originating from South Asia also move to South-East Asia (including Singapore and Malaysia), and in smaller part to the Republic of Korea (Wickramasekara, 2011). Permanent migration of skilled/professional South Asian migrant workers also occurs to Western Europe, Australia and North America (Srivastava and Pandey, 2017).

Although not a focus of this report, intraregional labour migration in South Asia is also prominent. As a result of high levels of both permanent and cyclical regular and irregular migration for employment between countries in the subregion, some with ‘open borders’, it is difficult to ascertain an accurate figure of the scale of intraregional migrant worker flows in South Asia. However, existing migrant stock data show an overall continual decrease in the scale of intraregional migration in South Asian countries since the 1990s (UNDESA, 2017a; Srivastava and Pandey, 2017), as discussed earlier in this report.

4.3 National sources of labour migration statistics

Section 4.3 provides a review of available sources of labour migration statistics in South Asia, while commenting on their overall quality and completeness. As this report focuses on out-migration from the subregion,⁴⁶ those sources that do collect information on labour migration statistics are analysed primarily in the context of their quality and completeness of data on nationals migrating for employment abroad from South Asian origin countries. However, labour force and household surveys, population censuses and other administrative data can also provide a wealth of information on dynamics of international labour migrant stocks within the subregion.

Detailed information on how to adequately measure migration – including foreign-born persons, stocks of foreigners, stocks of returned migrants, stocks of foreign born citizens and emigrants – in population and housing censuses is available in Appendix VII. In addition, the ILO has published manuals on measurement methodology of international labour migration statistics, including *International Migration Statistics: Guidelines for Improving Data Collection Systems* (Bilsborrow, R.E., et al., 1997), and *Statistics on International Labour Migration: A Review of Sources and Methodological Issues* (Hoffmann and Lawrence, 1996).

4.3.1 Labour Force Surveys

A Labour Force Survey (LFS) is the main source of household-based information on work-related statistics (ILO, n.d.c.), giving a “snapshot” of current employment conditions of a country’s working age population. In addition to measuring the structure of employment and unemployment within countries, Labour Force Surveys in countries of origin can gather valuable information regarding: (1) current household members living or working abroad; (2) estimates on return migration flows; and (3) attributes of return migrants (ILO, 2015a).

The extent to which accurate information on return migration can be derived from Labour Force Surveys is dependent on the coverage and quality of data collection. Firstly, Labour Force

46. As discussed in Section 2, this focus is intended to align with SAARC’s regional agenda on labour migration, which focuses on extraregional labour migration of South Asian nationals.

Surveys provide estimates from a limited sample of selected households in a given population. The samples of national Labour Force Surveys are generally representative of the country's overall population; however, some specific groups of the population may not be considered within the scope of the sample target population, as they are statistically insignificant in influencing measurement (ILO, 2013a). Thus, data on migrants reported by households may be underreported. It is also expected that respondents will need to recall very detailed information of the migrant workers (e.g. return migrants) who reside in a household, which could lead to errors.

Table 4.1 below analyses the most recently attainable/available LFS survey schedules in each South Asian country. In particular, it assesses the key questions included on migration – including nationality and citizenship, birthplace, previous residence and household members abroad – as well as relevant labour market variables of household respondents, such as education and occupation.

While every country in South Asia includes questions on relevant labour market variables in LFS questionnaires, the inclusion of questions on international migration is less consistent. For example, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka had limited or no questions regarding the aforementioned aspects of migration included in the most recently available survey schedule. In Bangladesh,

Table 4.1**Labour Force Survey data on international labour migration, South Asia**

Country	Frequency of data collection	Key questions on migration				Key labour market variables ⁵				
		Nationality/citizenship	Birthplace	Previous residence	Household members abroad	Labour force status	Education	Occupation	Status in employment	Monthly wages
Afghanistan*	Annual	–	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bangladesh	Quarterly	–	•	•	–	•	•	•	•	•
Bhutan	Annual	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
India	Annual	–	–	–	–	•	•	•	•	•
Maldives	Ad hoc	•	•	•	–	•	•	•	•	•
Nepal	10 years	•	•	•	–	•	•	•	•	•
Pakistan	Quarterly	–	–	•	–	•	•	•	•	•
Sri Lanka	Quarterly	–	–	–	–	•	•	•	•	•

Key: – = indicates that variable is not collected; • = indicates that the variable is collected.

Note 1: No standalone Labour Force Survey is conducted in Maldives. However, information on labour market variables is generated in the country's population and housing census.

Note 2: Table recreated and adapted from the *Analytical report on the international labour migration statistics database in ASEAN: Improving data collection for evidence-based policy-making* (ILO, 2015a).

***Note 3:** The survey for Afghanistan is not specifically a Labour Force Survey, but rather a household questionnaire that collects information on labour market variables and international migration.

Note 4: See Appendix V for sample questions from selected South Asian countries.

Note 5: The 'Key labour market variables' relate to all those surveyed in the LFS (the general labour force), including migrants and non-migrants.

Sources: Sri Lanka – Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey, Survey Schedule (2013 onward) (SLDCS, 2013); Nepal – Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/18 Questionnaire (Nepal CBS, 2017); Pakistan – Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey (2017 – 2018) (PBS, 2014); India – National Sample Survey Office, Socio-Economic Survey, Sixty-Eighth Round: July 2011 – June 2012, Schedule 10: Employment and Unemployment (NSSO, 2011); Bhutan – Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, Department of Employment, Labour Market Information and Research Division, Labour Force Survey Report 2015 (MOLHR, 2015); Bangladesh – Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning Statistics and Informatics Division, Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 2015-16 (BBS, 2017); Afghanistan – Central Statistics Organization, Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey, 2013-2014 (CSO, 2016); Maldives – National Bureau of Statistics – 2016 Household Income Expenditure Survey.

the survey did inquire as to whether the respondent had previously resided in a different country, which country and when they arrived in the country of enumeration, but did not include questions on citizenship, birthplace, or household members abroad. Nepal, Bhutan and Afghanistan, on the other hand, included a number of relevant questions on international migration. In many of these countries, there were modules for internal migration but not for international migration. For sample questions on international migration from Labour Force Surveys in selected South Asian countries, see Appendix V.

Given the current scarcity in questions related to migration in LFS questionnaires in South Asia, the ability to collect useful information on nationals employed abroad or returning from employment abroad through this particular statistical exercise is more limited at present. Consequently, the current analysis demonstrates a gap in the collection of labour migration statistics in the subregion that could be improved through reassessing the overall design and content of survey schedules, to include more relevant questions and consequently produce more timely and relevant international labour migration statistics for evidence-based policy-making.

4.3.2 Population censuses

A census is a count of the entire population within a given country, providing an updated “snapshot” of a country’s general population at a given point in time – including its demographic, social and economic characteristics. It can measure fertility, mortality and movement, and it can produce crucial data that allow a country to uncover inequalities in employment, education and wealth (UNFPA, n.d.a.). Conducting an accurate and timely census is also imperative for countries to adequately administer government funds, resources and services.⁴⁷

Population censuses are usually the most comprehensive sources, in terms of coverage, of international migration statistics in any country. Censuses tend to include at least three questions that generate relevant information on international migrants living within a given country, including: (1) country of birth; (2) citizenship; and (3) year or period of arrival in a country (UNSD, 2012). However, many censuses may also collect information on their nationals living abroad, as well as information on return migrants, by including questions on household members residing abroad and country of previous residence. For a summary of methodological approaches and sample questions, please see Appendix VII.

For information on migrant workers, censuses may also collect valuable information on labour market information of nationals residing abroad, including but not limited to: labour force status; education; economic activity; occupation and status in employment.

Despite numerous caveats, limitations and exceptions, censuses are often the preferred source of population and international migration statistics because of their relative regularity in frequency (in some regions), relative comparability between countries due to the minimal number of questions included (compared to other sources) and their relatively universal coverage of a country’s entire population – including its international migrants (UNDESA, 2007).

47. A census is a “complex exercise that requires detailed planning of enumeration methods, applied technology, privacy and confidentiality regulations, data collection, data processing and imputation, data analysis and dissemination, archiving, and quality control evaluations of coverage and quality” (UNSD, 2014). It is frequently the largest and costliest data collection activity undertaken by a country.

However, while censuses are a valuable statistical tool to collect data on a country's entire population, they are typically only conducted every ten years in the South Asian subregion and around the world. As a result, the most recent changes and shifts in dynamics and attributes of international migrants (including migrant workers) and of South Asian nationals residing abroad may not be reflected in census results.

Table 4.2 below benchmarks the most recent population censuses carried out in each South Asian country, and analyses the availability of questions on respondents' previous residence, household members abroad and their respective labour market attributes.

Table 4.2**Population census data on international labour migration, South Asia**

Country	Latest year available	Next scheduled census	Previous residence*	HH members abroad	Location of HH members abroad	HH members returned from abroad	Labour force status	Education	Economic activity	Occupation	Status in employment
Afghanistan	1979	–	–	–	–	–	•	•	•	•	•
Bangladesh	2011	2021	5 years	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bhutan	2005	2017	Previous	•	•	–	•	•	•	•	•
India	2011	2021	Previous	–	–	–	•	•	•	•	•
Maldives	2014	2019	1 year, 5 years	•	•	–	•	•	•	•	•
Nepal	2011	2021	5 years	•	–	–	•	•	•	•	•
Pakistan	1998	2017	<1 year, 1 year – 5 years, 5 – 10 years, > 10 years	•	–	–	•	•	•	•	•
Sri Lanka	2012	2022	Previous	–	–	–	–	•	•	•	•

Key: – = indicates that variable is not collected; • = indicates that the variable is collected.

* "Previous" indicates that the survey inquires where the respondents' last previous residence was, "1 year" indicates that the survey inquires where the respondents were living one year ago, "5 years" indicates that the survey inquires where the respondents were living five years ago, and so forth.

Note 1: Table recreated and adapted from the Analytical report on the international labour migration statistics database in ASEAN: Improving data collection for evidence-based policy-making (ILO, 2015a).

Note 2: The 'Key labour market variables' relate to all those surveyed in the LFS (the general labour force), including migrants and non-migrants.

Definitions:

(1) Labour force status – refers to whether a person was employed, unemployed, or not economically active (outside of the labour force).

(2) Economic activity differs from occupation as it refers to the category of work realized by the employer. Economic activity is classified internationally by the United Nations in the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC, Rev.4), which covers 21 categories classified in lettered 'sections' between A (Agriculture, forestry and fishing) and U (Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies). Further information on ISIC Rev. 4 is available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regdnld.asp?Lg=1> (UNSD, 2008).

(3) Occupation – "a set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person, including for an employer or in self-employment". Major occupational groups are classified by the International Standard Classification of Occupations Rev. 2008, available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_172572.pdf.

(ILO, 2008).

(4) Status in employment – "describes the type of risk and authority which workers have in their jobs, as reflected in their explicit or implicit contract of employment" – e.g. employer and employee, among others. Status in employed international classifications are outlined in the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93), available at:

<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/class/intercop/expertgroup/2013/AC267-20.PDF>. (ILO, 2013b).

For additional definitions for key concepts utilized in this report, see Appendix I.

Sources: Afghanistan – Ministry of Planning, Central Statistics Office – First National Population Census, 1979 (Afghanistan CSO, 1979); Bangladesh – Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Sample Census 2011 (BBS, 2011); Bhutan – Royal Government of Bhutan, Population and Housing Census of Bhutan (BOCC, 2011); India – Ministry of Home Affairs, Census of India 2011 Household Schedule (MHA, 2011); Maldives – Ministry of Planning and National Development, Population and Housing Census 2006 Shaviyani Form (MPDN, 2006); Nepal – Central Bureau of Statistics, National Population Census 2011 (CBS, 2012); Pakistan – Population Census Organization, Fifth Housing and Population Census (PBS, 1997); Sri Lanka – Department of Census and Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011 (DCS, 2012); Census dates – UNDESA, 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme, available from [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/censusdates.htm#\(16\)](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/censusdates.htm#(16)). (UNSD, n.d.a.).

Every country (excluding Afghanistan, which has not conducted a census since 1979⁴⁸) inquired about the previous residence of household members, either asking the individual to specify where his or her previous residence was (regardless of timeframe), or asking the individual to specify where he or she was living in a defined period of time – e.g. one year prior, or five years prior. Additionally, questions on a respondent's attributes, such as occupation and education, were typically included in each country's census. However, questions specifically referring to those household members abroad, and regarding the location of nationals abroad were not as commonly employed. While information on household members returned from abroad may be derived from questions on previous residence (e.g. if the location of previous residence was a different country), only Bangladesh included questions specifically related to the attributes of return migrants.

Interestingly, the Bangladesh census questionnaire includes a specific section on household members returned from abroad in the last five years, asking that respondents specify from which country they returned from, the date that they returned from abroad and the reason they returned from abroad, either due to: (1) "completion of tenure"; (2) "Pushed out/illegal"; (3) "Returned intentionally"; (4) "Health reason"; (5) "On leave"; (6) "Poor salary"; and (7) "Others" (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011). See Appendix VI for these and other sample questions from various South Asian census questionnaires.

It is important to note that while South Asian countries may have included relevant sections and questions on the factors outlined in the below table, many did not employ classifications based on the relevant international standards, or they used major categories that mirrored or were similar to the international classifications, but were still different. This in turn can hinder or prevent the availability for comparison of census results between countries.

4.3.3 Administrative records

Administrative records relevant to migration may include population registers, registers of foreigners and other types of registers that cover specific groups of persons, such as asylum seekers. Other administrative sources may include emigration clearances, the issuance of residence or work permits, or embarkation and disembarkation cards at borders (GMG, 2017).

Such sources of information can be reliable provided that the administrative system is well maintained, coverage is complete and high-quality reporting is maintained (IOM, 2008). However, there are a myriad of limitations and caveats associated with administrative sources, including issues of coverage and registration/de-registration not being strictly followed. Additionally, concepts, definitions and classifications within administrative systems "are often different from those required to meet statistical user needs" (IOM, 2008).

In South Asia, a number of statistical agencies produce extensive administrative records on nationals registering for employment abroad. Many of these are the primary sources of information on nationals employed abroad relied upon in the South Asian ILMS database, as well as in Section 4.4 of this report.

However, it is important to iterate that administrative records on nationals employed abroad in South Asia are limited in particular because they do not include those migrant workers departing

48. The validity of the 1979 census has been called into question, particularly given that it only covered two-thirds of the country due to security problems (UNFPA, 2012).

who are not registering and thus not being recorded in an agency's records. Additionally, some groups of migrants might have more limited accessibility to registration services. This in turn can introduce data biases and inhibit the accuracy of labour migration statistics.

Administrative records in South Asia also differ significantly in their scope. For example, some administrative records may only capture migrants moving to certain countries of destination. Others may include only migrants working in particular professions or migrants who have attained a certain level of education.

Table 4.3 below shows the agencies producing key administrative data on South Asian nationals employed abroad, as well as the timeframe in which data have been collected, and the particular variables that agencies in each country collect and make available for use. The specific data produced by many of these agencies, as well as further discussion on coverage, caveats and limitations, is discussed in Section 4.4.

Table 4.3**Administrative data sources on international labour out-migration, South Asia**

Member State	Agency(ies) responsible	Available since	Published	Key variables available
Afghanistan	-	-	-	-
Bangladesh	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment	1997	Online	Sex, country of destination, skill level
Bhutan	-	-	-	-
India	Ministry of External Affairs, Overseas Indian Affairs Division	2007	Online	Sex*, country of destination, method of recruitment**, origin state
Maldives	-	-	-	-
Nepal	Ministry of Labour and Employment, Department of Foreign Employment, Foreign Employment Promotion Board	2008	Statistical Yearbook	Sex, country of destination, skill level, method of recruitment, origin province, migrant worker fatalities abroad, welfare fund payments
Pakistan	Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Overseas Employment Corporation	1971	Statistical Yearbook, Online	Country of destination, skill level, occupation, method of recruitment, origin province, migrant worker fatalities abroad, welfare fund payments
Sri Lanka	Bureau of Foreign Employment, Ministry of Foreign Employment, Foreign Employment Agency, Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission	1997	Statistical Yearbook, Online	Sex, country of destination, skill level, occupation, method of recruitment, province of origin

***Note 1:** Publicly-available data on sex of nationals departing for employment abroad in India only encompass females departing from the top 25 origin districts, and exclude nurses.

****Note 2:** Method of recruitment data in India do not provide disaggregated information on sex.

Note 3: "-" indicates that data are not collected or information is not available.

Note 4: Table recreated and adapted from the *Analytical report on the international labour migration statistics database in ASEAN: Improving data collection for evidence-based policy-making* (ILO, 2015a).

Note 5: "Key variables available" represent all possible variables available from all relevant agencies. Some agencies may only produce data on specific nationals departing for employment abroad, or specific attributes. The key variables available have been informed through an analysis of Version I of the South Asian ILMS.

Note 6: Data for Bangladesh from BMET available from: <http://www.bmet.gov.bd/BMET/statisticalDataAction>. Data for Bangladesh from the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment available from: <http://www.probash.gov.bd/site/page/01cee270-9baa-4654-bc49-634811dea6a9/Employment-&-Remittance>.

Note 7: Online data for Pakistan available from BE&OE at: <https://beoe.gov.pk/reports-and-statistics>.

Note 8: Statistical yearbooks and online statistics for Sri Lanka from the SLBFE available from: <http://www.slbfe.lk/page.php?LID=1&MID=220>.

4.4 Official statistics on out-migration for employment in South Asia⁴⁹

4.4.1 Data coverage, caveats, limitations and other considerations

(i) Sources of labour migration statistics (ILMS)

While Section 4.3 outlines a wide array of possible sources of labour migration statistics, the proceeding data in this report on outflows of South Asian migrant workers and their specific attributes are based primarily on administrative data records collected and maintained by various government agencies in South Asia through 31 December 2017. It is worth noting that there may be some variations in the data depending on which source they were downloaded from. As a result, the exact dataset or report from which data for each country have been derived is specified where applicable in text and under figures.

Those migrants reflected in these administrative records typically include individuals who are registering with their respective governments prior to departure, gaining clearance for emigration, applying for exit visas, or obtaining labour permits for foreign employment.⁵⁰ In addition to government data collected on exit or emigration visas, or data on the total registration numbers of nationals seeking employment abroad, other useful information on outflows of migrant workers and their specific attributes may be derived from: (1) data on members registered with special insurance schemes for migrant workers abroad; (2) reports from recruitment agencies based in countries of origin; and (3) border exit registrations (Agossou, 2015). However, because these sources may not be official or government sources, or the population covered may not be sufficiently representative of all nationals departing for employment abroad, they are not included in this discussion, nor in most of the sources relied upon in the South Asian ILMS database (discussed in Section 2).⁵¹

(ii) Definitions, coverage and limitations

For countries in South Asia that do collect data on nationals departing for employment abroad, the period of time in which data have been collected, as well as the size and scope of the populations covered, varies significantly between countries. It is worth mentioning that while the following subsection will present some of the data caveats and limitations in labour migration data in the South Asian subregion, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

The proceeding data in this report focus primarily on flows of migrant workers derived from administrative records. The term “flow” inherently indicates that a movement of a migrant across international borders has occurred within a certain defined time period (in most instances, one calendar year). While the term “outflow” is frequently employed in the South Asian and ASEAN ILMS databases, the reality is that country-level migrant worker outflow data are usually derived from administrative records on labour permits issued, or the total number

49. The following section analyses labour migration outflow data availability in South Asian countries, and provides limited analysis of data and trends in labour migration when directly related to data coverage and availability. It is not intended to reach in-depth conclusions on labour migration trends derived from data. For more detailed reports, please see, for example, GIZ and ILO, 2015; Wickramasekara, 2011; and Doherty et. al., 2014.

50. As with the ILMS, the attributes included are limited to those for which sufficiently complete data were made available. As such, a number of important themes and migrant worker attributes may not be discussed in this section, corresponding with lack of sufficient data.

51. The notable exception being the proposed table 11, which presents data on total welfare fund payments paid out from insurance schemes in South Asian origin countries to the families of deceased migrant workers.

of emigration clearances granted per year, for example, which are not actually recording an individual's movement across an international border. However, data on labour permits issued, for example, may be used as a proxy for flows, with the term "outflow" mainly being utilized for purposes of statistical harmonization and uniformity.

Data coverage in any country is affected by definitional constraints, by the specific methodologies employed and by the overall quality of data collection. There is still no universally employed statistical definition of a migrant worker, and many countries might conceptualize these populations differently. Often, both origin and destination countries may utilize different criteria for what qualifies as work and what qualifies as a remunerated activity. In general, countries in South Asia and further afield frequently employ different criteria to identify international migrants by, for example, applying different minimum durations of residence for immigrants (IOM, 2017) or different minimum durations of absence in the case of emigrants in countries of origin (Poulain and Perrin, 2001), which would also affect measurement of international migrant workers. This in turn would hinder comparability of national statistics on international labour migration.

Many South Asian countries may collect data on total migrant worker outflows and on migrant worker attributes – e.g. sex, skill level, occupation, method of recruitment or province/state of origin – but might not publish these data. As such, as important as collecting relevant data on labour migration is the subsequent timely reporting and release of administrative records for use by policy-makers, technocrats designing or monitoring government programmes, research institutes, non-profit organizations, regional and international organizations and the public at-large.

Data coverage may also be influenced by policy, as countries in the subregion apply different regulations regarding who is required to register prior to departure.

In India, for example, only those citizens who fall under the category of 'Emigration Check Required' (ECR) are required to obtain emigration clearance, by applying to the Indian Protector of Emigrants (POE) office in the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, 2007). This includes migrants going to 17 ECR countries of destination (Ministry of Home Affairs, n.d.).⁵² Those migrants who have 'Emigration Check Not Required' (ECNR) passports – usually those who have passed Class X or with "an educational qualification of matriculation and above" (e.g. enrolled in a college or university) – are not required to register (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, n.d.a.).⁵³ Other ECNR individuals include holders of diplomatic/official passports, persons holding permanent immigration visas, nurses possessing two years' diploma recognized under the Indian Nursing Council Act of 1947, tax payers, or all persons over the age of 50. As such, the data for outflows of Indian nationals for employment abroad, as shown in Figure 4.1 in the proceeding subsection, do not reflect the actual volume of migrant worker outflows each year.

In some countries, data temporality can vary substantially as well. In Nepal, data on the outflows of migrants for employment abroad have only been collected since 2008/09, following passage

52. These destination countries include: United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Malaysia, Libya, Jordan, Yemen, Sudan, Afghanistan, Indonesia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon, Thailand and Iraq (emigration banned).

53. For a complete list of factors exempting an individual from requiring an ECR passport in India, reference the Ministry of External Affairs Overseas Indian Affairs webpage, specifically the following resource page:

<http://www.mea.gov.in/emigration-abroad-for-emp.htm> [accessed 15 Jan. 2018].

of the Foreign Employment Act in 2007. In addition, data are collected on a fiscal year basis, beginning the 17 July and ending 16 July of the following year (Nepal Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2016). Shorter periods of data availability can limit the possibility of performing long-term trends analysis, while differing temporality in data collection periods is one factor that can limit the ability to compare data between countries, particularly when other countries collect and publish data on a calendar-year basis.

Finally, different countries have different overseas labour administrative functions, including data collection, spread across different divisions in the same ministry, or different ministries altogether, which can make coordination between different units – including statistics producers – difficult (Wickramasekara, 2011).

(iii) Migrants not captured in labour migration statistics

In many South Asian countries, important and often large groups of migrant workers departing each year are not being captured in outflow data. Most importantly, large and often unquantifiable populations of permanent and seasonal migrants are moving both regularly and irregularly to neighbouring countries in the subregion each year, and are likely not being registered in administrative data records. Particularly between countries where bilateral movement frameworks exist in the subregion – e.g. between India and Nepal, India and Bhutan, or Bhutan and Nepal – migrants can move freely across borders without a passport or visa (Srivastava and Pandey, 2017), which may disincentivize migrants from registering with the relevant government agency prior to departure (or, said migrants may not be required to register in the first place). In Nepal, for example, the Government specifically states that outflow data do not record any Nepali migrants who are migrating cross-border to India (Nepal Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2016).

Cross-border mobility is also restricted between many countries in the subregion, such as between Bangladesh and India, and between India and Pakistan (Srivastava and Pandey, 2017). Irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking – including of migrant workers – between these countries is clandestine and consequently unquantifiable (Srivastava and Pandey, 2017). Those migrants moving irregularly for employment in a neighbouring South Asian country would also not be captured in official administrative data records on outflows of migrant workers.

Outflows of South Asian migrant workers in an irregular situation to destinations outside of the subregion also occur, both to the Middle East (specifically Gulf Cooperation Council countries), Malaysia and further afield. Some are smuggled or trafficked (Doherty et. al., 2014), while others enter through regular channels and become irregular, sometimes through no fault of their own. They may have arrived in destination countries on visit or tourist visas and then remained, either in contravention of visa conditions or by converting the tourist visas into work visas. Alternatively, migrants in an irregular situation may have had valid work visas that have since expired or become nullified as a result of an unauthorized change in employer. Many of these migrants would not have registered for employment abroad, and may not be reflected in official data on migrant worker outflows in their countries of origin.⁵⁴

54. This section has presented some of the data caveats and limitations in labour migration data in the South Asian subregion; however, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

In addition to migrants in an irregular situation, other groups of migrant workers who are often overlooked in official data sources are female migrant workers and return migrant workers. Female migrant workers may be underrepresented in administrative data records and other official data sources due to cost and policy barriers to their registration (Srivastava and Pandey, 2017; Ozaki, 2012; ILO 2015c).

Capturing return migration accurately in data has long been a conundrum both in South Asia and around the world. While population surveys and administrative records may capture outflows, countries of origin often do not have the framework in place to capture return migrants in population surveys or administrative records. Particularly, relevant questions on return migration are often not included in Labour Force Surveys and other population surveys in South Asia (as shown in Section 4.3 of this report). Given the small proportion of sampled return migrants in a Labour Force Survey, those who are captured would likely not be representative of the total population of return migrants. While a census may capture more data on return migrants in view of its comprehensive coverage, the limited frequency of censuses (e.g. every 10 years) means that capturing information on return migration during intercensal periods is difficult.

(iv) Data coverage over time

While data on migrant workers and their attributes may face numerous limitations in the subregion, it would appear that data collection, accuracy and reporting have improved significantly over time, and particularly in recent years.

Additionally, there have been indications of greater interaction between various agencies and producers of labour migration statistics both within and between countries in the subregion. For example, a number of high-level meetings on labour migration statistics have taken place both exclusively between South Asian countries, as well as at a regional level in Asia and the Pacific, where South Asian stakeholders have participated. A few examples include, but are not limited to:

- (1) ILO Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion (ILO-ARTEP), International Labour Migration Statistics and Information Networking in Asia Regional Seminar, New Delhi, India (17-19 March 1993).⁵⁵
- (2) 1st ILO-KOSTAT Workshop on International Labour Migration Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, Daejeon, Republic of Korea (16-18 November 2015).
- (3) 2nd ILO-KOSTAT Workshop on International Labour Migration Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, Daejeon, Republic of Korea (10-12 October 2016).
- (4) 3rd ILO-KOSTAT Workshop on International Labour Migration Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, Daejeon, Republic of Korea (25-26 September 2017).⁵⁶

55. Papers and proceedings of the regional seminar are available in print at the following link:

https://books.google.com.mx/books/about/International_labour_migration_statistic.html?id=DCxYAAAYAAJ&redir_esc=y [accessed 20 Jan. 2018].

56. The workshops represented numerous statistical agencies from Asia and the Pacific. South Asian participants included: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. For further details on these meetings, see: http://www.appi.re.kr/eng/work/sub03_2_2017.html (APPI, n.d.) [accessed 21 Jan. 2018].

- (5) ILO Technical Meeting on Labour Migration Statistics in South Asia, Colombo, Sri Lanka (28-29 November 2017)).⁵⁷

4.4.2 Total outflows of nationals for employment abroad

Taking into account the aforementioned examples of caveats and limitations to migrant worker outflow data in the subregion, the following subsections presents key statistics on the outflows of South Asian migrant workers and their characteristics, where data were collected or made available. It is worth noting that an increase in the number of nationals registering for employment abroad might not be indicative of a rise in actual migrant worker outflows from any given country, in the instance that methods for registering migrant outflows were improved, if there was a rise in the number of offices registering migrants, a lowering of the direct or indirect costs associated with registering, or an increase in public awareness around the need to register for foreign employment, for example (ILO, 2015a). Outflows data in many instances may not reflect actual individuals departing, but rather registrations, and thus may count repeat migrants who register more than once. In several countries, outflows data may not capture highly-skilled migrants departing the country for employment.

Five of eight South Asian countries, all of which are the largest countries of origin in the subregion – Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – collect data on total outflows of nationals for employment abroad on an annual basis.

In Bangladesh, data on migrant worker outflows are available since 1976 from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET). In India, the Overseas Employment Division of the Ministry of External Affairs has made data available on migrant worker outflows since 2007, while in Nepal, data on foreign employment has been collected and released since fiscal year 2008/09 by organizations including the Department of Foreign Employment (DOFE) and the Foreign Employment Promotion Board (FEPB). In Pakistan, data on nationals leaving for employment abroad are collected by the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE), the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), with total outflow data collected and made available by BE&OE since as early as 1971 (Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, 2016). In Sri Lanka, the Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) (amongst others) has collected and released data on Sri Lankan nationals employed abroad since 1997.⁵⁸

No data are available on total outflows of nationals for employment abroad in Afghanistan, Maldives, or Bhutan. No official or government data on labour migration are currently collected in Afghanistan. Although labour migration out of Afghanistan does occur, most migrants leaving the country are in Pakistan or the Islamic Republic of Iran. Because of the conflict situation in Afghanistan, many of these individuals have not been categorized as migrant workers, despite the fact that many are economically active, but rather as asylum-seekers, refugees and persons

57. For further details on this meeting, see: http://www.ilo.org/colombo/whatwedo/events/WCMS_613468/lang-en/index.htm (ILO, 2017c) [accessed 21 Jan. 2018]. Also see Appendix IV of this report.

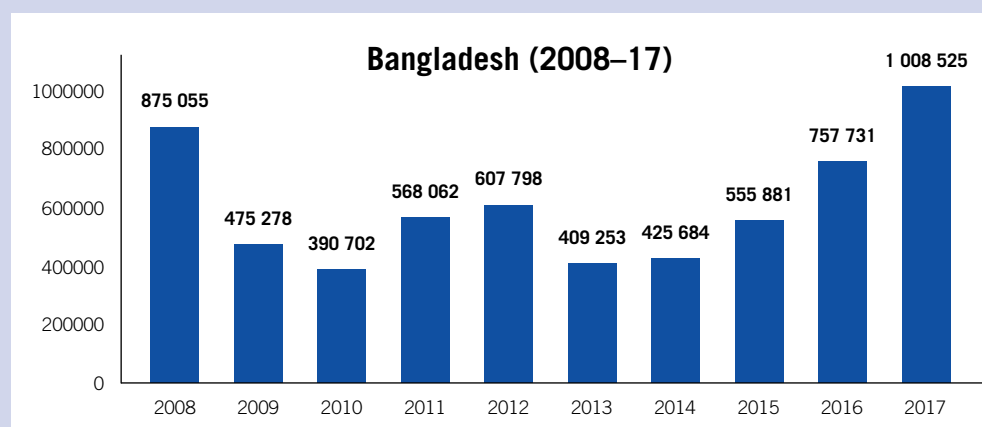
58. All of these aforementioned agencies participating in data collection on migrant workers have been created (more or less) recently, as labour migration out of South Asia has increased in scale in recent decades, and governments have recognized the need to establish specialized agencies to promote the rights and needs of nationals employed abroad. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of all organizations and ministries in South Asian countries dedicated to matters of foreign employment or to data collection on nationals employed abroad.

in refugee-like situations (Timothy and Saskiumar, 2012). Maldives is primarily a country of destination for international migrant workers, and the country does not collect any data on outflows of Maldivian nationals for employment abroad. The Bhutan Ministry of Labour and Human Resources conducts an Overseas Employment Program; however, no data are made publicly available on migrant worker outflows. Additionally, Bhutan is a net receiving country of migrant workers (UNESCAP, n.d.).

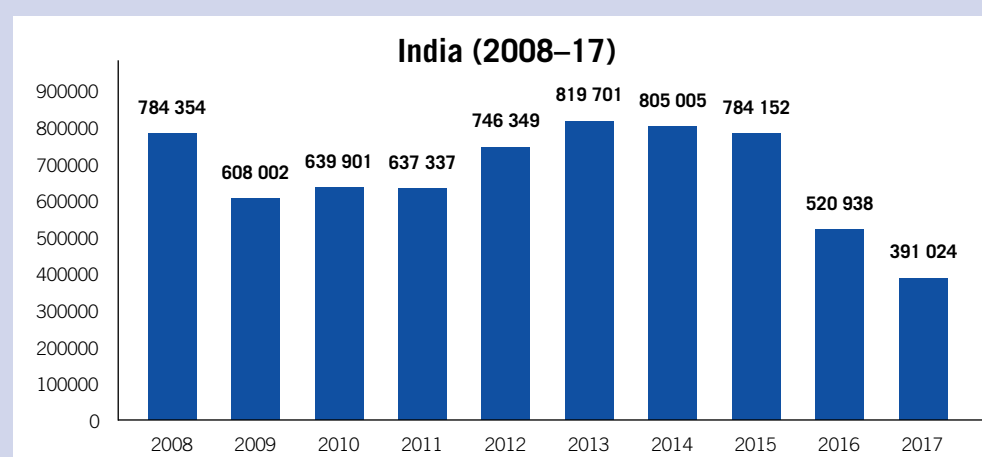
Figure 4.1 below shows a collection of migrant worker outflow data in selected South Asian countries for all years that data were collected and made available between the period 2008 and 2017.

Figure 4.1

Annual outflows of nationals registering for employment abroad, selected South Asian countries

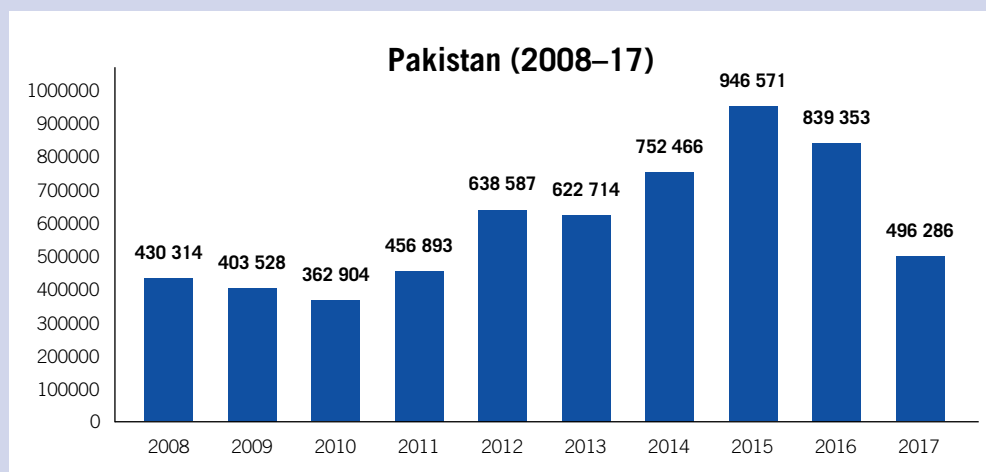


Source: Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, 'Overseas Employment and Remittances from 1997 to 2018' (BMET, 2018).



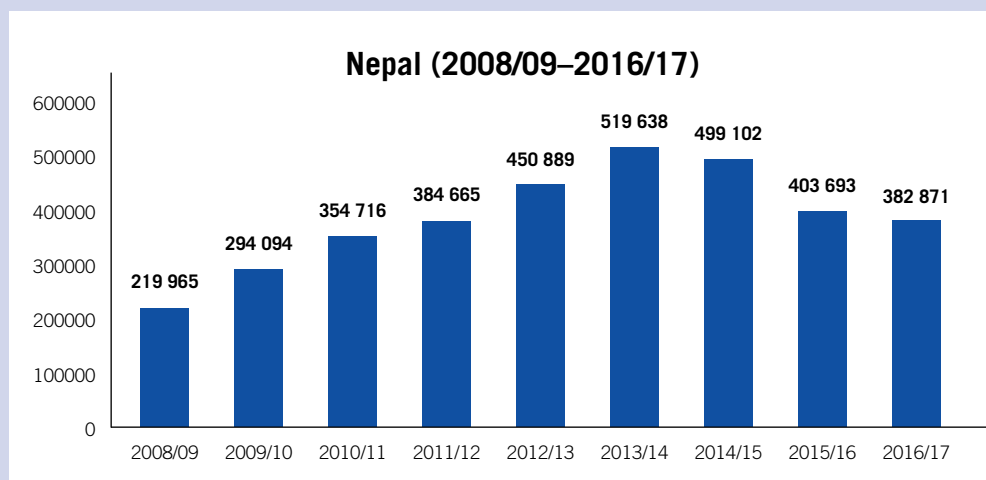
Source: Indian Ministry of External Affairs and Overseas Employment Division, 'Month-wise POE Emigration (EC) Report', 2007-2018 (MEA, n.d.b.).

Note: Data only capture those nationals who are leaving abroad for employment and who are identified as 'Emigration Clearance Required' per Indian regulations. Data include only those departing to work in ECR countries. Data comprise emigration clearances recorded by recruitment agencies, project exporters, as well as through direct recruitment by foreign employers.



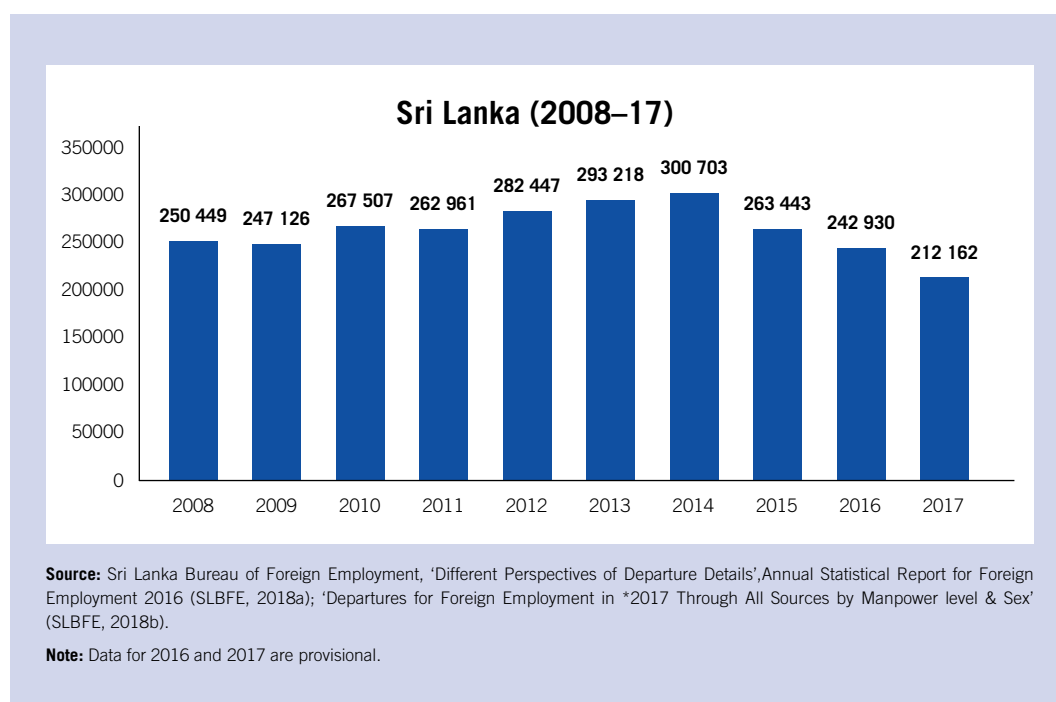
Source: Pakistan Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, 'Statement showing number of Pakistani workers registered for overseas employment through Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment during the period 1971 - 2018 (up to May), country wise emigrations' (BE&OE, n.d.a.).

Note: Data for outflows to particular destination countries exclude persons processed for employment abroad by the Pakistan Overseas Employment Corporation, which represents a very limited number of nationals registering for employment abroad. BE&OE data do not represent individual migrants, as a person will be counted each time they register with the agency (e.g. repeat migrants will be counted). Data may likely exclude highly skilled persons migrating who are less likely to register prior to departure.



Source: Nepal Ministry of Labour and Employment, 'Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal: 2015/16 - 2016/17' (Ministry of Labour and Employment, forthcoming).

Note: Data do not include Nepali migrant workers who migrated to the Republic of Korea for foreign employment through the government-to-government Employment Permit System. They also do not reflect those who migrate cross-border to India. Numbers for 2008/09 – 2011/12 include only those permits issued to workers going abroad by means of a recruitment agency. The larger estimates for 2012/13 – 2016/17 may be due in part to the incorporation of estimates of individuals recruited directly as well as through a recruitment agency. Estimates for Nepal are based on fiscal year (e.g. 2008/09), beginning the 17 July and ending 16 July. The total reported outflows vary slightly depending on which dataset is utilized.



4.4.3 Outflows of nationals for employment abroad, by sex

Labour migration can provide opportunities for women to improve their lives and the lives of their families. It may also allow women to escape economic and social vulnerabilities in their origin societies and provide an avenue for their greater autonomy and empowerment (Sijapati, 2015). Consequently, adequate country-level and regional-level data are imperative in order for governments and policy-makers to understand how labour migration can benefit women, while also limiting the potential for female migrant workers to experience additional vulnerabilities and discrimination both in origin and destination countries.

Although the overall proportion of females as a total of all migrant workers leaving South Asia has historically been very low, outflows have become increasingly more feminized over time. However, despite the increasingly important role of gender in labour migration from South Asia, only three of eight South Asian countries collect and make data publicly available on the total outflows of nationals for employment abroad, disaggregated by sex – Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.⁵⁹ Notably, Pakistan does collect data disaggregated by sex but does not make this information publicly available, with a 2016 report stating that, “in its regular reporting formats, the BE&OE does not keep sex-disaggregated data. Upon special request, it can produce information on the number of men and women migrant workers, such as when a government minister requires it” (Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, 2016). The same report in 2016 indicated that over 99 per cent of Pakistani workers registering for employment abroad are men (Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, 2016). The Pakistan Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) does make data publicly available on the number of Pakistani migrant women departing the

59. If sex-disaggregated data are collected in other countries, these are not published or readily available for public use.

country for employment abroad each year, but outflows registered by the OEC represent a very small proportion of all nationals registering for employment abroad in the country.⁶⁰

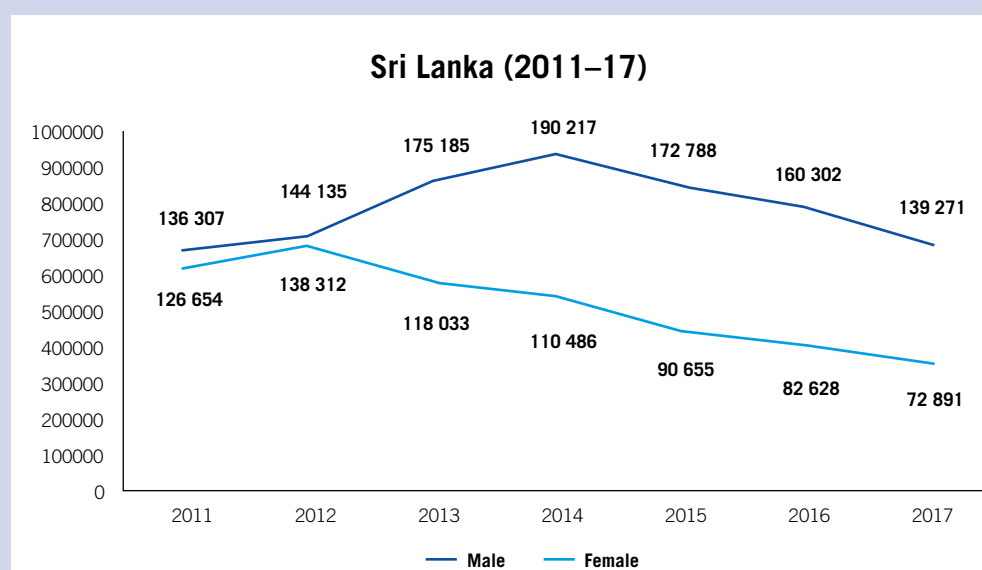
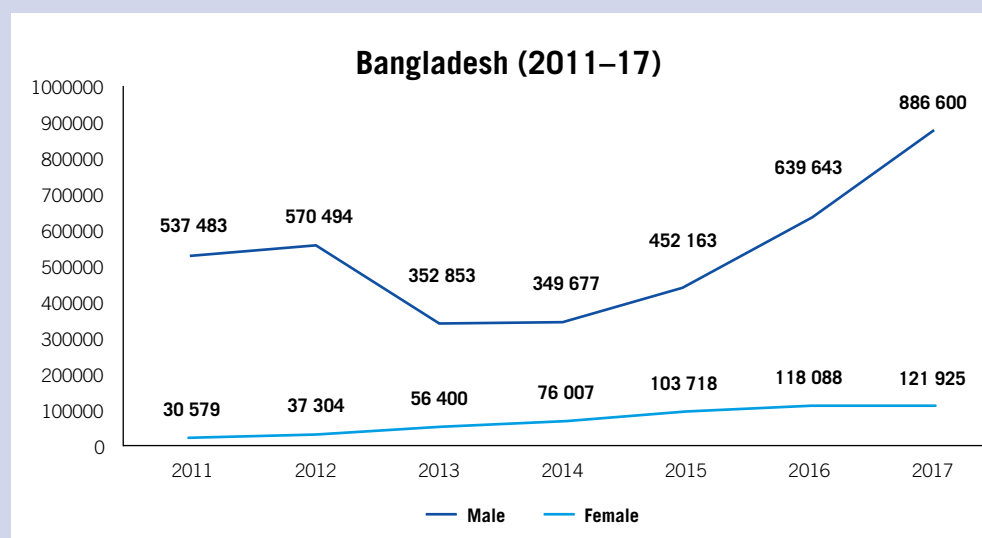
A number of states in southern India, such as Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, are origins of a high number of female migrants, primarily going to GCC countries, where they are employed both in lower-skilled positions in domestic work, as well as semi-skilled positions as health-care workers (Thimothy and Sasikumar, 2012). However, many depart the country through the ECNR route or may depart through irregular channels. Moreover, India does not make any official government data publicly available on the sex of all nationals leaving for employment abroad. Instead, the only dataset available on the sex of nationals departing for employment abroad are for females originating from the top 25 origin districts in India, and these total figures exclude nurses (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, n.d.c.). Due to the limited scope of this particular dataset, it has not been included in this report.

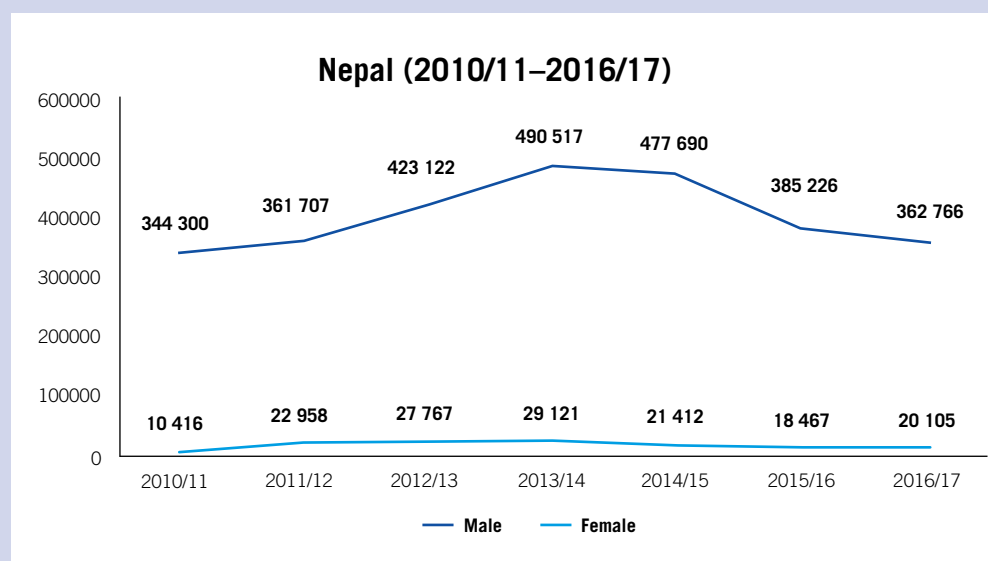
In Sri Lanka, for many years the Government facilitated labour migration for women domestic workers as a strategy for poverty alleviation and unemployment reduction (Jayasuriya and Opekin, 2015). This may be reflected in the large overall recorded numbers of females departing each year reflected in Figure 4.2 below; however, official government data (produced by the Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment) show that overall outflows of registered female migrants in Sri Lanka have decreased considerably since 2012, coinciding with the introduction of the Family Background Report, which restricts women with young children from migrating (Abeyasekara and Jayasundere, 2013). In Nepal, the number of female migrant workers departing has been quite steady over time, with a slight lull beginning in 2014/15 corresponding with a temporary government ban on women domestic workers departing the country (Nepal Ministry of Labour and Employment, forthcoming), and further decreases in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

In Bangladesh, overseas labour migration has typically been male dominated, with women constituting less than 1 per cent of the total outflows of registered migrant workers from the country between 1991 and 2003 (Siddiqui, 2004). However, the Government relaxed restrictions on female labour migration in 2003 (Migrant Forum Asia, n.d.a.), and recent data show a change in this trend, with a steady increase in the number of female Bangladeshi migrant workers registering for employment abroad, as shown in the below figure. Previously, it is likely that notable numbers of women were migrating out of Bangladesh for employment, but their migration processes likely remained undocumented (Ahn, 2004).

In part due to past and current bans, as well as age- and non-age-related restrictions on female labour migration in many South Asian countries, women departing their respective countries of origin for employment abroad may be more likely to migrate in an irregular situation (as previously discussed) (Srivastava and Pandey, 2017; ILO, 2015c), thus precluding their accurate representation in government data on total migrant worker outflows. Figure 4.2 below shows available sex-disaggregated migrant worker outflow data for Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. In all three countries, much higher numbers of males are registering for employment abroad than females.

60. The Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) of Pakistan is owned entirely by the Government of Pakistan. Its mandate is to “promote the employment of professionals, highly skilled, skilled, semi-skilled and un-skilled manpower in foreign countries” (OEC, n.d.).

Figure 4.2**Total outflows of nationals for employment abroad, by sex, selected South Asian countries**



Note 1: Due to varying definitions and methodologies, data between countries are not comparable.

Note 2: Only provisional data were available for 2016 and 2017 for Sri Lanka at the time this report was written.

Note 3: Data do not include Nepali migrant workers who migrated to the Republic of Korea for foreign employment through the government-to-government Employment Permit System. Estimates for Nepal are based on fiscal year (e.g. 2008/09), beginning the 17 July and ending 16 July.

Sources: Nepal – Ministry of Labour and Employment, *Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal: 2015/16 - 2016/2017* (Nepal MLE, forthcoming); Bangladesh – Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, 'Overseas Employment of Female Workers from 1991 to 2018 (BMET, n.d.a.)'; Sri Lanka – Bureau of Foreign Employment, 'Different Perspectives of Departure Details', *Annual Statistical Report of Foreign Employment 2016* (SLBFE, 2018a); Sri Lanka – Bureau of Foreign Employment, 'Departures for Foreign Employment in *2017 Through All Sources By Country Manpower level & Sex' (SLBFE, 2018b).

4.4.4 Outflows of nationals for employment abroad, by country of destination

All countries (five in total) producing data on total outflows of nationals for employment abroad in South Asia also produce and release data on the countries of destination.⁶¹

Analysing the destination countries of South Asian migrant workers can allow for the identification of the principal annual labour migration corridors, particularly extraregionally. However, it is important to mention that the ranking of top destination countries can vary quite significantly between years, likely due to frequently changing political, economic and labour market factors in and between origin and destination countries. Taking the most recent data available on countries of destination of migrant workers in five separate South Asian countries, it is evident that labour migration between South Asia and Gulf Countries are by far the most prominent migrant worker corridors, with the notable exception being Nepali and Bangladeshi migrant workers registering for employment in Malaysia (see table 4.4 below).

61. If data are collected on country of destination in other countries, the ILO is either not yet aware, or these are not published or made available for public use.

Table 4.4**Top five destination countries of nationals registering for employment abroad, selected South Asian countries, 2017**

Rank	Bangladesh, 2017		India, 2017		Nepal, 2016/17		Pakistan, 2017		Sri Lanka, 2017	
1	Saudi Arabia	551 308	United Arab Emirates	149 962	Qatar	121 128	United Arab Emirates	275 436	Qatar	56 644
2	Malaysia	99 787	Saudi Arabi	78 611	Malaysia	95 244	Saudi Arabia	143 363	Saudi Arabia	37 900
3	Oman	89 074	Kuwait	56 380	Saudi Arabia	73 892	Oman	42 362	Kuwait	37 420
4	Qatar	82 012	Oman	53 332	United Arab Emirates	57 887	Qatar	11 592	United Arab Emirates	36 657
5	Kuwait	49 604	Qatar	24 759	Kuwait	13 134	Bahrain	7 919	Oman	8 872

Note 1: Data for top destination countries for each South Asian origin country are shown for the most recent reference year made available.

Note 2: Data for Sri Lanka for 2017 are provisional.

Note 3: Estimates for Nepal are based on fiscal year (e.g. 2008/09), beginning the 17 July and ending 16 July. Notably, disaggregated data by country of destination when combined for all countries do not equal the total reported outflows of Nepali workers in other datasets.

Note 4: In India, data only capture those nationals who are leaving abroad for employment and who are identified as 'Emigration Clearance Required' per Indian regulations. Data comprise emigration clearances recorded by recruitment agencies, project exporters, as well as through direct recruitment by foreign employers. Only departures to 'Emigration Clearance Required' countries are recorded.

Note 5: Due to varying definitions and methodologies, data between countries are not comparable.

Sources: Bangladesh – Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, 'Overseas Employment and Remittances from 1997 to 2018' (BMET, 2018); India – Ministry of External Affairs Overseas Employment Division, 'Emigration Clearance Related Report, 'State-wise ECR country-wise EC given', 2007 – 2017 (MEA, n.d.d.); Nepal – Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal: 2015/2016 – 2016/17 (Nepal MLE, forthcoming) ; Pakistan – Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, 'Statement showing the number of workers registered for overseas employment by BE&OE during the period 1971 – 2018 (up to May), country wise' (BE&OE, n.d.b.); Sri Lanka – Bureau of Foreign Employment, 'Departures for Foreign Employment in *2017 Through All Sources By Country Manpower level & Sex' (SLBFE, 2018b).

4.4.5 Outflows of nationals for employment abroad, by skill level

(i) Overview of migrant worker skill level data and classifications

For potential migrants in South Asian origin countries, skills recognition and certification can prove vital in the job search and job matching processes. Matching potential migrants with appropriate employment opportunities abroad can help prevent 'brain waste' and 'deskilling' once they have arrived to work in destination countries (ILO, n.d.b.). Skills development in origin countries can also aid governments in implementing more effective employment, training and migration policies, responding to skills requirements of foreign employers and simultaneously developing a better understanding of how labour migration affects their own labour markets. In many countries such as India, which has invested significant resources in skills development – e.g. through the Skill India initiative (World Bank, 2017) – collecting data on migrant skill levels and the subsequent outcomes may also be a valuable tool in monitoring the return on the country's investment in relevant initiatives.

For migrants returning to origin countries, it can often be very difficult to transfer both formal and informal training and knowledge acquired abroad to employment opportunities in their countries of origin. The "recognition and accreditation of migrant workers' skills and qualifications, and, where that is not possible, providing a means to have their skills and qualifications recognized," (ILO, n.d.b.) can have important consequences on the skills retention and the reintegration of return migrants (ILO, 2015a), enhancing their employability and labour market mobility (ILO, 2017d).

In order to inform effective evidence-based policy-making surrounding the skills and qualifications of potential and return migrants, accurate and timely data on migrants' skill levels is imperative. However, there are a number of methodological and definitional limitations that hinder the ability of both origin and destination countries to accurately capture this information.

First and foremost, there is no uniform definition of 'skills' between countries, as many countries in South Asia and abroad define 'skills' based on differing occupational and educational attainment criteria (ILO, n.d.b.). Skill level may also be determined by the type of job migrants obtain in the destination country, or the wages that they command within a given job. Secondly, for those countries that do collect data on the skill level of their nationals registering for employment abroad, the designations employed are usually country-specific and do not reflect international skill level classifications. When there are similarities employed between two different countries in regard to the skill level classifications employed – e.g. the similar use of the term "unskilled" in Nepal and Pakistan, or the similar use of the classification "skilled" between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh – the criteria of which migrant worker falls within any given sub-category vary between every country. As a result, it is currently not possible to compare data on skill level of nationals registering for employment abroad in South Asia.

The ILO establishes international standards for skills level classification in its 2008 revision of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08). ISCO-08 classifies skill levels based on a numerical scale between 1 and 4. Each skill level is correlated to international occupational categories also outlined in the ISCO-08 document.⁶² Further, it defines a 'skill' as "the ability to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job", while 'skill level' is defined as "a function of the complexity and range of tasks and duties to be performed in an occupation" (ILO, 2008).

Table 4.5 below reflects the major skill levels in ISCO-08, and the major occupational group(s) that each skill level corresponds to:

62. Skill Level 1 "typically involves the performance of simple and routine physical or manual tasks". Skill Level 2 "typically involves the performance of tasks such as operating machinery and electronic equipment; driving vehicles; maintenance and repair of electrical and mechanical equipment" and more, with occupations at this skill level typically requiring "relatively advanced literacy and numeracy skills and good interpersonal communication skills". Skill Level 3 "involves the performance of complex technical and practical tasks" while Skill Level 4 "involves the performance of tasks that require complex problem-solving, decision-making and creativity based on an extensive body of theoretical and factual knowledge in a specialized field". For further details on ISCO-08 skill level classifications and their corresponding occupational categories, reference pages 12-15 of the ISCO-08 document, available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_172572.pdf (ILO, 2008).

Table 4.5**Mapping of ISCO-08 major groups to skill levels**

ISCO-08 major groups	Skill Level
1 Managers	3+4
2 Professional	4
3 Technicians and Associate Professionals	3
4 Clerical Support Workers	2
5 Services and Sales Workers	2
6 Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers	2
7 Craft and related Trades Workers	2
8 Plant and Machine Operators, and Assemblers	2
9 Elementary Occupations	1
0 Armed Forces Occupations	1+2+4

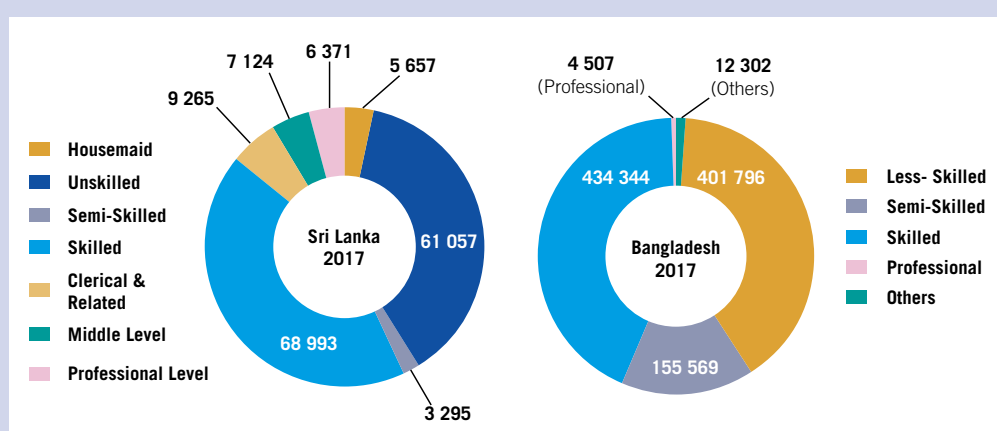
Source: ILO International Standard Classification of Occupations (Rev. 2008), available from:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_172572.pdf.

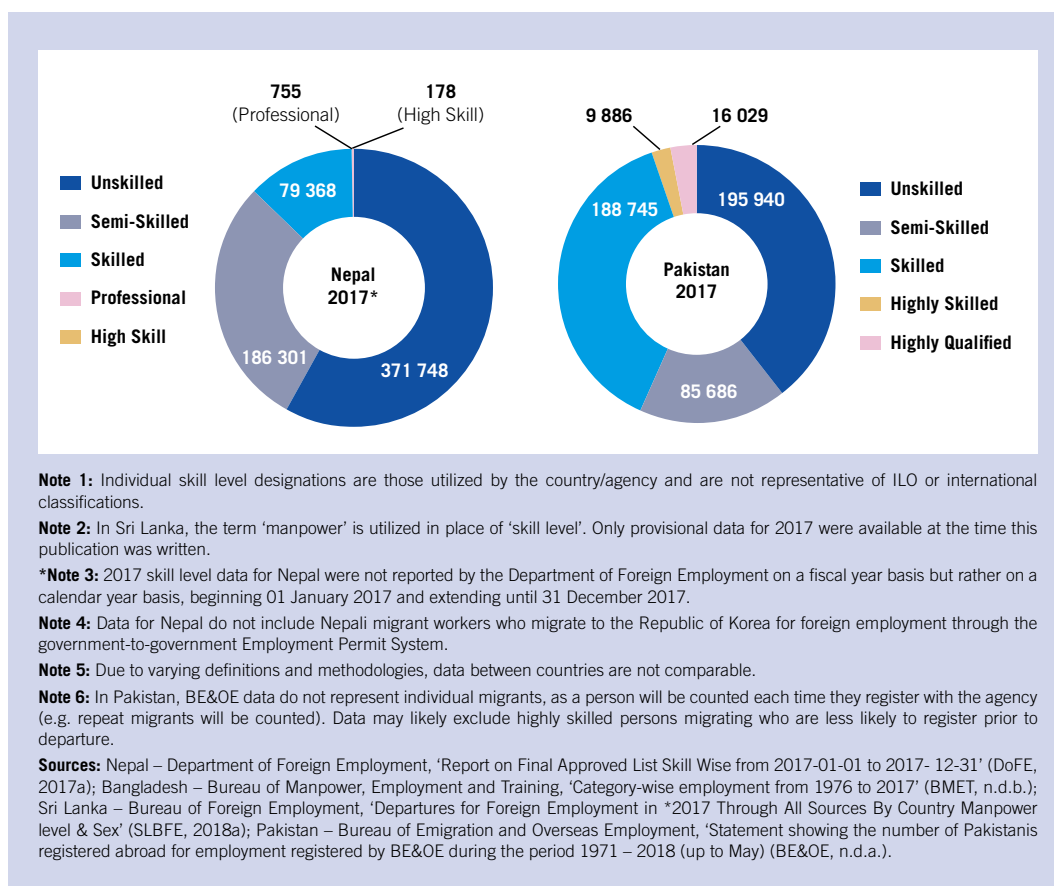
(ii) Data on skill level of nationals registering for employment abroad in South Asia

Four of eight South Asian countries collect and publish data on the skill level of nationals registering for employment abroad – Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. It is important to mention that each country employs different categories for migrant skill level. Additionally, none of these countries currently classify skill level based on the numerical categories between 1 and 4 outlined in the ISCO-08 classifications discussed above.

Figure 4.3 shows available data on migrant worker skill levels for the most recent published reference year in four South Asian countries.⁶³

Figure 4.3**Skill level of nationals registering for employment abroad, selected South Asian countries**

63. If data are collected on skill level in other countries, the ILO is either not yet aware, or these are not published or made available for public use.



4.4.6 Outflows of nationals for employment abroad, by occupation

(i) Overview of migrant worker occupational data and classifications

ISCO-08 defines a 'job' as "a set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person, including for an employer or in self-employment" (ILO, 2008). An 'occupation', on the other hand, refers to "the kind of work performed in a job", and is defined as a "set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterized by a high degree of similarity" (ILO, 2008).

The value of collecting data on occupation of migrants is similar to that of collecting data on skill level. Said data can be used in a number of exercises, including "labour market analysis, educational planning, human resource planning, occupational health and safety analysis, wages analysis" (ILO, 2008) and more. In a context of labour migration from countries of origin, knowing what types of work that migrants are engaged in abroad, as well as what types of occupations are sought after by foreign employers, can be incredibly valuable both for implementing effective labour and migration policies, as well as assessing the future effects of labour migration on origin labour markets.

Within South Asia, there is again a lack of harmonization both in-country and between countries regarding the definition of 'occupation', as well as occupational classifications. For example, while labour force surveys in an origin country may include relevant questions on occupation of its citizens and on international migrants residing within the country per ISCO-68, 88 or 08 standards, other statistical agencies, including labour and foreign employment ministries, often do not follow a standard of international classifications of occupation when recording

and publishing data in administrative records on nationals employed abroad. Custodians of administrative records on occupation in South Asia may also utilize ISCO standards as a starting point before adding custom occupational classifications or modifying ISCO occupations, in what would appear to be an effort to reflect foreign market requirements and specific job orders from abroad.

Table 4.6 below outlines the major occupational groups outlined in ISCO-08. Within each major occupational group are a series of sub-major, minor and unit groups.⁶⁴

Table 4.6**ISCO-08 major occupational groups**

ISCO-08	Major Groups
1	Managers
2	Professionals
3	Technicians and associated professionals
4	Clerical support workers
5	Service and sales workers
6	Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers
7	Craft and related trades workers
8	Plant and machine operators, and assemblers
9	Elementary occupations
0	Armed forces occupations

Source: International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) database for South Asia, citing the ILO International Standard Classification of Occupations (Rev. 2008), available from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_172572.pdf.

(ii) Data on occupation of nationals registering for employment abroad in South Asia

As of July 2018, the ILO DWT for South Asia has only been able to identify three countries in South Asia that maintain a complete dataset on the occupations of all migrants registering for employment abroad each year: Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan.⁶⁵ To the ILO's knowledge, only Sri Lanka has aligned occupational data on migrant workers employed abroad with international classifications outlined in ISCO-08. The Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment completed the exercise of coding its previously existing occupational data to ISCO-08 classifications in mid-2018, although the ILO has not yet obtained these final data for inclusion in this report or in the proposed International Labour Migration Statistics Database for South Asia.

Pakistan collects a rather uniform and complete dataset on occupations of its nationals registering for employment abroad, with an established compact list of occupations and

64. For further description on sub-major groups and minor groups within each major occupational group, reference ISCO-08 documents, specifically ISCO-08 Part 3: Group Definitions, available at:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco08/> [accessed 04 Feb. 2018].

65. If data are collected on occupation in other countries, the ILO is either not yet aware, or these are not published or made available for public use.

corresponding data in each occupational category, spanning decades. There are a total of 40 occupational categories utilized in this particular dataset, and these do not reflect ISCO-08, nor do they reflect the individual system of classifications designed and implemented in Pakistan – known as the Pakistan Standard Classification of Occupations (the latest update of which was issued in 2015).⁶⁶

While some occupational groups in the Pakistan Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE)’s dataset may reflect an ISCO-08 major group – such as “manager” – other occupational groups are reflective of ISCO-08 sub-major groups (such as “teacher”), minor groups (“doctor” or “blacksmith”), or even unit groups within minor groups (such as “welder” or “tailor”). Other occupational classifications in the dataset on occupations do not reflect any ISCO-08 major groups, sub-major groups, minor groups, or unit groups whatsoever – such as “steel fixer” or “labourer” – with no specified parameters of which workers fall within the latter category.

Table 4.7 below outlines the 40 different occupation groups that Pakistan’s Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE) utilizes in its datasets.

Table 4.7

Occupational classifications of nationals registering for employment abroad, Pakistan

Engineer	Technician	Doctor	Mechanic
Nurse	Cable Jointer	Teacher	Driver
Accountant	Operator	Manager	Tailor
Welder	Surveyor	Secretary/Stenographer	Fitter
Storekeeper	Denter	Agriculture	Comp/Analyst
Clerk/Typist	Designer	Forman/Supervisor	Goldsmith
Mason	Pharmacist	Carpenter	Rigger
Electrician	Salesman	Plumber	Draftsman
Waiter/Bearer	Blacksmith	Steel Fixer	Photographer
Painter	Artist	Labourer	Others

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment (BE&OE, n.d.c.)

Nepal also collects separate data on occupation of migrants seeking employment abroad, disaggregated based on each migrant’s method of recruitment for employment. In 2017, the Bureau of Foreign Employment possessed occupational data with nearly 4,500 different occupations for those migrants obtaining labour permits through means of a recruitment agency, while there were over 10,000 different occupational titles recorded for migrants obtaining labour permits on an individual basis. Examples of specific occupations included but were not limited to: A/C Duct Man, A/C Mechanic, A/C Mechanic Assistant, A/C Mechanical

66. In the latest document of PSCO-2015, Pakistan acknowledges that its individual standard classification of occupations differs from ISCO-08, stating that, “it is customary to provide a local variant of ISCO in order to take into account country specific changes in the configuration of occupations”, reflecting similar statements made in ISCO-08. For further information regarding the PSCO, please reference the following document:

http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/PSCO_2015.pdf.

Helper, A/C Technician, A/C Technician/Mechanic, A/C Installation Technician, Accountant, Accountant General, Accountant of Wages and Salaries and so forth (Nepal Department of Foreign Employment, 2017b; 2017c).⁶⁷ While some occupational categories may coincidentally correspond with sub-major groups, minor groups, or unit groups in ISCO-08, it would appear that most classifications have been chosen based on the specific job order received in Nepal from employers in destination countries.⁶⁸

While the structure of occupational data collection and reporting in Pakistan and Nepal⁶⁹ may be a highly-specified approach to collecting each migrant's specific job title and/or occupation, the lack of formulated groupings of occupations, or their variation from the exact ISCO-08 standards, makes the ability to analyse or utilize the data quite difficult at a subregional level. Even at a country-level, there appears to be a lack of formal criteria or methodology in certain countries mandating which worker falls under a specific occupational category.

It is worth noting that while many South Asian countries may collect data on occupations of nationals employed abroad, these data may not be available in an official dataset or made available for public use. Additionally, they may only reflect occupations of some but not all nationals registering for employment abroad.

4.4.7 Outflows of nationals for employment abroad, by method of recruitment

(i) Overview of data and classifications on method of recruitment of migrant workers

In South Asia, recruitment agencies are crucial actors in the process of foreign employment, maintaining relationships with potential employers in destination countries and assisting with the bureaucracy and logistics of documentation and travel for those migrants who have accepted work abroad. Recruitment agencies can also provide valuable knowledge on labour market demand in destination countries.

However, in South Asia and in other regions, recruitment agencies may also perpetuate “malpractice and abuse, including high fees, misrepresentation of jobs, failure to meet placement obligations and contract substitution” (ILO, 2016a). Such activities may jeopardize the livelihoods of migrants, while increasing the vulnerabilities that they face both in origin and destination countries. Currently in South Asia, regulation of recruitment agencies and sub-agents tends to be inadequate (ILO, 2016a).

The importance of fair recruitment in the governance of labour migration is recognized in the 2030 Development Agenda. Target 10.7 aims toward facilitating orderly, safe and regular migration, for which the primary indicator is the “recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of yearly income earned in country of destination” (UNDESA, n.d.b.).

In addition, the ILO has a number of important initiatives on fair recruitment of migrant workers, including the Fair Recruitment Initiative – a four-pronged global initiative aimed towards: (1) enhancing global knowledge on national and international recruitment practices; (2) improving

67. Unfortunately, despite the highly useful nature of Nepal's occupational data on migrant workers abroad, the size of the dataset and the lack of uniformity precluded its inclusion in the South Asian ILMS.

68. It is also worth noting that occupational data were collected and presented on a calendar year basis, differing from the typical fiscal year structure utilized by various statistical and foreign employment agencies in the country.

69. Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment's occupational data prior to alignment with ISCO-08 consisted of nearly 5,000 different occupational categories, with no aggregation of said groups into major groups.

laws, policies and enforcement mechanisms to promote fair recruitment practices; (3) promoting fair business practices; and (4) empowering and protecting workers (ILO, n.d.e.). Collecting better data on method of recruitment in South Asia could also work towards supporting ILO's Fair Recruitment Initiative, particularly in the area of knowledge enhancements (Objective 1).

In addition, in 2016 the ILO *General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment* were adopted to "inform the current and future work of the ILO and other organizations, national legislatures, and the social partners on promoting and ensuring fair recruitment (ILO, 2016c).⁷⁰ Accurate data are also an important step towards promoting evidence-based policies on fair recruitment at the subregional and global levels.

Effective regulation of recruitment in South Asia will be dependent on accurate and timely data. To begin with, data on the method of recruitment can help to inform policy-makers about the degree to which nationals departing for employment abroad are utilizing the services of recruitment agencies, compared to the overall size and scale of migrant workers who are being directly recruited by foreign employers, ostensibly without the assistance of an intermediary party. The latter numbers may also show to what extent nationals seeking employment abroad are using personal networks (such as family members or friends that are already employed abroad) in order to locate employment opportunities in destination countries. Changes in the method of recruitment may be a result of many factors, such as burdensome procedures for recruitment agencies, or their diminishing relevance in light of greater availability of information and personal networks.

(ii) Data on method of recruitment of nationals registering for employment abroad in South Asia

Three of eight South Asian countries currently provide disaggregated data on the method of recruitment of nationals registering for employment abroad – India, Sri Lanka and Nepal.⁷¹ Nepal has only collected data on nationals recruited directly by a foreign employer since 2012/13, while data on migrants employed with the assistance of a recruitment agency have been collected since 2008/09 (Nepal Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2016). In India, although total numbers on those directly recruited versus those recruited through an agency are published, there are no sex-disaggregated data on method of recruitment made available (they are, however, available for Sri Lanka and Nepal).

Figure 4.4 compares data on outflows of nationals who were recruited directly by the foreign employer, with the number of nationals who obtained employment abroad through a recruitment agency. According to the following statistics, registered migrant workers in Nepal and India were more likely to obtain employment abroad through a recruitment agency than through individual means. In Sri Lanka, registered migrants departing through individual recruitment surpassed those obtaining employment through a recruitment agency after 2015 (see figure 4.4). It is of particular importance to mention that data on method of recruitment may be misleading, given that nationals who are recruited "individually" may still be receiving some form of assistance from a recruitment actor.

70. For additional information on the ILO's Fair Recruitment Initiative, please reference the following link: <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/fair-recruitment/lang--en/index.htm> [accessed 26 Apr. 2018]. In addition, further information on the ILO's *General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment* are available from:

http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/fair-recruitment/WCMS_536755/lang--en/index.htm [accessed 26 Apr. 2018].

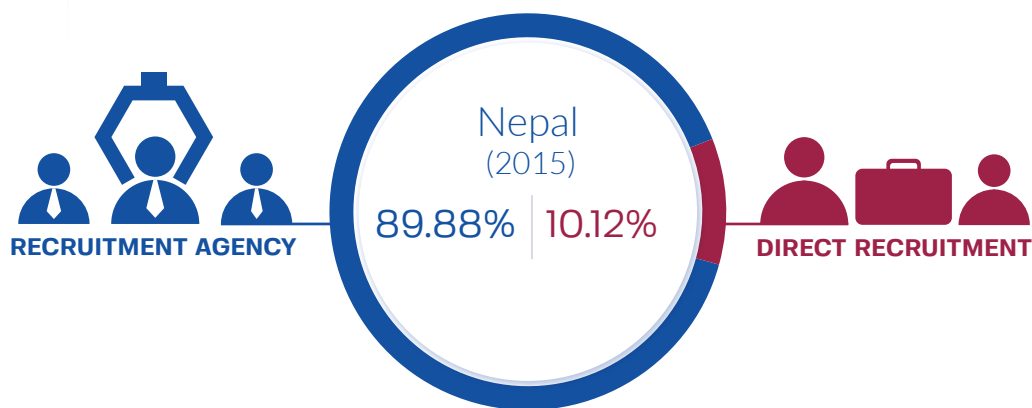
71. If data are collected on method of recruitment in other countries, the ILO is either not yet aware, or these are not published or made available for public use.



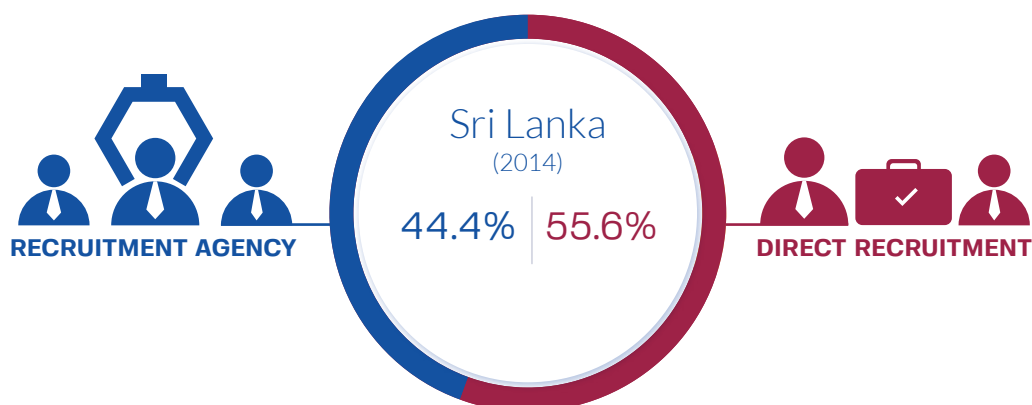
Outflow of nationals for employment abroad by method of recruitment



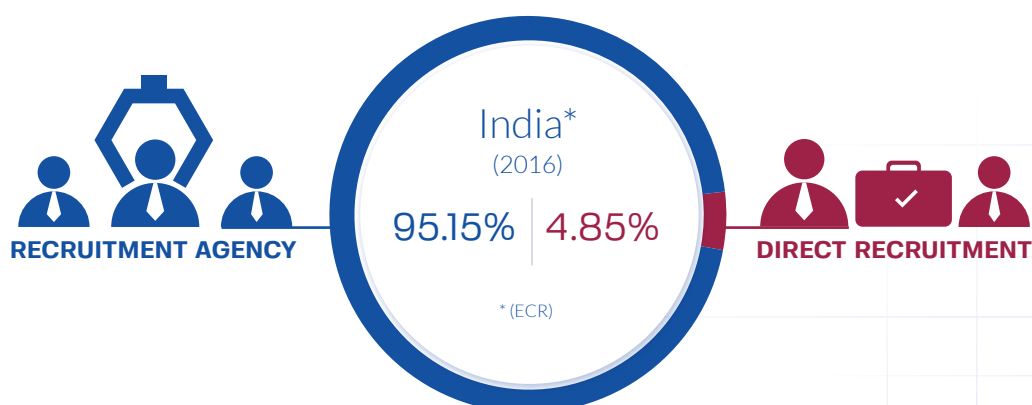
International
Labour
Organization



Source: Nepal Foreign Employment Promotion Board



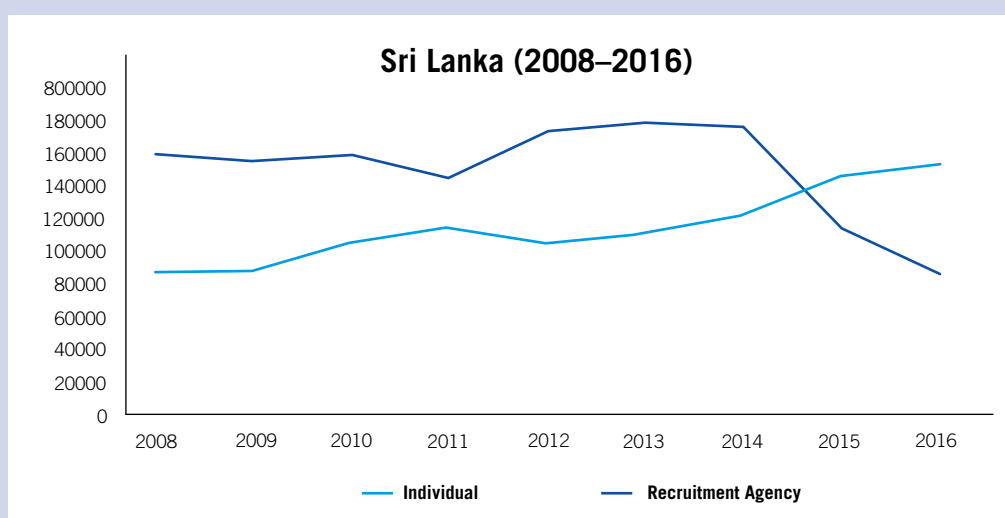
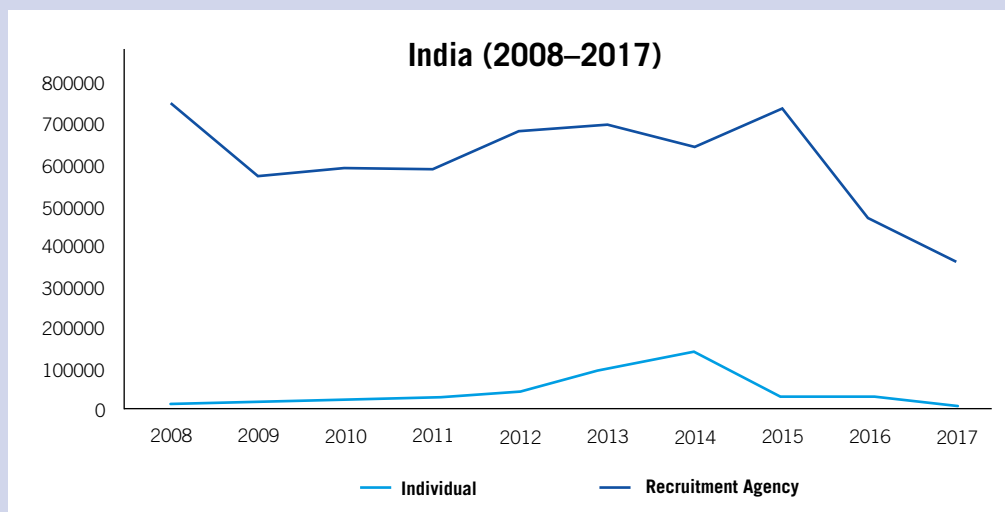
Source: Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment

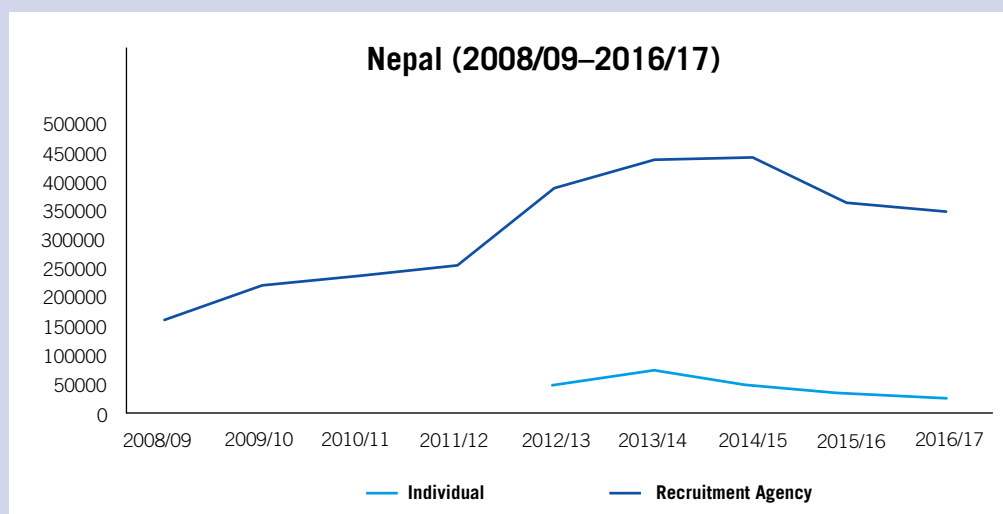


Source: Indian Ministry of External Affairs Overseas Employment Division

Figure 4.4

Outflows of nationals for employment abroad by method of recruitment, selected South Asian countries





Note 1: In Nepal, data on individuals departing for employment abroad have only been collected since 2012/13. Estimates for Nepal are based on fiscal year (e.g. 2008/09), beginning the 17 July and ending 16 July. Data do not include Nepali migrant workers who migrated to the Republic of Korea for foreign employment through the government-to-government Employment Permit System. When disaggregated data on method of recruitment are combined they do not reflect the total outflows reported in other datasets.

Note 2: In India, data only capture those nationals who are leaving abroad for employment and who are identified as 'Emigration Clearance Required' per Indian regulations. Data comprise emigration clearances recorded by recruitment agencies, project exporters, as well as through direct recruitment by foreign employers.

Note 3: Only provisional data were available from 2016 for Sri Lanka at the time this report was written.

Note 4: Due to varying definitions and methodologies, data between countries are not comparable.

Sources: India – Ministry of External Affairs Overseas Employment Division, 'Emigration Clearance Related report, 'Month-wise, PoE EC given to RA' and 'Emigration Clearance Report, Month-wise, PoE given for direct recruitment by FE' (MEA, n.d.e; MEA, n.d.f); Sri Lanka – Bureau for Foreign Employment, 'Different Perspectives of Departure Details', *Annual Statistical Report for Foreign Employment 2016* (SLBFE, 2018a); Nepal – *Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal: 2015/16–2016/17* (MLE, forthcoming).

4.4.8 Outflows of nationals for employment abroad, by province/state of origin

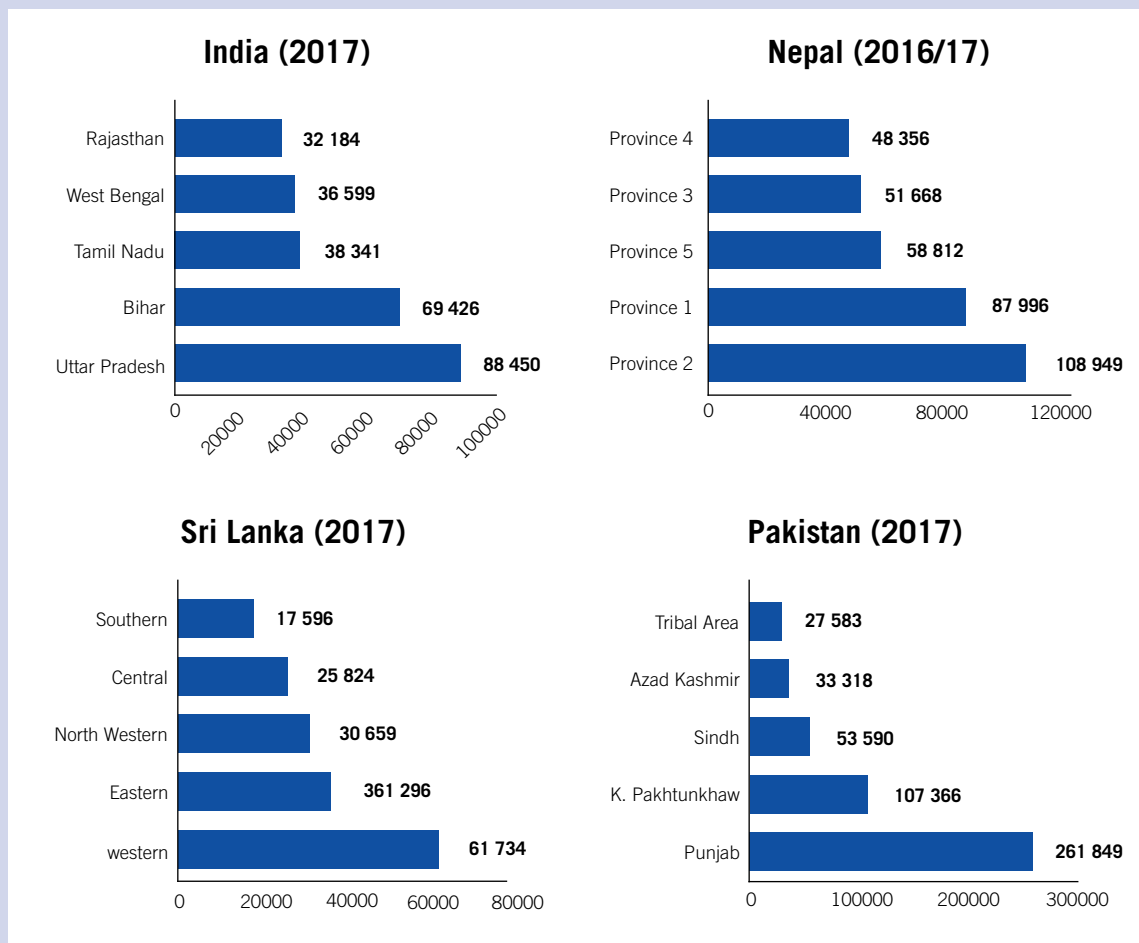
Four of eight countries in South Asia – Nepal, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka – currently collect and publish data on the origin states/provinces of international migrant workers.⁷² These data are a valuable tool in order to assess trends in labour migration at a subnational level, and can help pave the way for additional research and policy discussions focused on explaining which demographic, political, economic and/or social factors in a given province or state in any country may contribute to a higher or lower propensity towards nationals departing for employment abroad; as well as the contribution that migration could make to the development of those regions. This is particularly relevant given the increased decentralization of functions and responsibilities observed in the region, including in India, Nepal and Pakistan.

Figure 4.5 below shows the top five origin states/provinces of nationals registering for employment abroad in four South Asian countries, for the most recent reference year available.

72. If data are collected on province/state of origin in other countries, the ILO is either not yet aware, or these are not published or made available for public use.

Figure 4.5

Top five origin provinces/states of nationals registering for employment abroad, selected South Asian countries



Note 1: Only provisional data were available for 2017 for Sri Lanka at the time this report was written.

Note 2: Data for Nepal do not include Nepali migrant workers who migrated to the Republic of Korea for foreign employment through the government-to-government Employment Permit System. Estimates for Nepal are based on fiscal year (e.g. 2008/09), beginning the 17 July and ending 16 July.

Note 3: In India, data only capture those nationals who are leaving abroad for employment and who are identified as 'Emigration Clearance Required' per Indian regulations. Data comprise emigration clearances recorded by recruitment agencies, project exporters, as well as through direct recruitment by foreign employers.

Note 4: Due to varying definitions and methodologies, data between countries are not comparable.

Note 5: In Pakistan, BE&OE data do not represent individual migrants, as a person will be counted each time they register with the agency (e.g. repeat migrants will be counted). Data may likely exclude highly skilled persons migrating who are less likely to register prior to departure.

Sources: Nepal – *Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal: 2015/16-2016/17* (MLE, forthcoming); Pakistan – Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment, 'Workers registered for overseas employment by BE&OE during the period 1991 – 2018 (up to May), province wise' (BE&OE, n.d.d.); India – Ministry of External Affairs Overseas Employment Division, Emigration Clearance Related Report, 'State-wise POE-wise given to RA' and 'State-wise POE-wise given for direct recruitment by FE' (MEA, n.d.g.; MEA, n.d.h.); Sri Lanka – Bureau for Foreign Employment, 'Departures for foreign employment in 2017 through all sources by country and district' (SLBFE, 2018c).

4.4.9 Migrant worker fatalities abroad

(i) Migrant worker fatalities in context

For South Asian migrant workers around the world, with larger attention given to those residing in Gulf countries, many of those employed, particularly in lower-skilled manual labour and domestic work, are often subject to poor, unsafe, or even hazardous working and living conditions, which could ultimately lead to accidents or death (Ahn, 2004). Other indirect factors in destination countries, including insufficient medical facilities and lack of access to basic health care, may also jeopardize the safety and well-being of migrant workers (Ahn, 2004). For the families of deceased migrants, losing a family member can create immense personal and emotional hardship, while also stripping them of important sources of income. More accurate data on migrant worker fatalities abroad, as well as cause of death, can assist in better understanding the scale of the problem, and may educate policy-makers in origin and destination countries on establishing improved national and bilateral frameworks to guarantee the safety and health of migrant workers. At present, it is virtually impossible to determine the exact cause of death of migrant workers abroad based on the data published by South Asian origin countries, and it is exceedingly difficult to determine what workplace-related conditions may or may not have contributed to a migrant's death.

(ii) Data on fatalities of South Asian nationals employed abroad

Four of eight countries currently compose and release a complete dataset covering migrant worker fatalities abroad – Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh. However, these datasets tend to vary significantly in terms of sources, methodologies and data coverage, and face significant limitations. Most, if not all, South Asian countries possess data on fatalities of nationals employed abroad, derived from the reports from their embassies and consulates, repatriated remains and/or insurance claims; however, these data may not be disaggregated to reflect solely migrant workers, are often not collected in one concrete dataset, or are frequently not published.

In Nepal, the ILO produced a specific publication on the deaths of Nepali migrant workers abroad, drawing on a number of data sources in the country, including from the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFE), the Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepali missions and embassies in other countries (which report on deaths of nationals abroad) and trade unions. Most data, however, originated from Nepal's Foreign Employment Promotion Board (FEPB), which had the most complete and accessible numbers. Even so, the report notes that none of the sources of data on migrant worker fatalities abroad were precise (ILO, 2016b). For example, data produced by FEPB only reflected "documents submitted by a relative or designated beneficiary of a deceased migrant worker when making a request for compensation" (ILO, 2016b). Although not included in the South Asian ILMS due to lack of availability in other countries, Nepal also collects and presents data on the cause of death of nationals employed abroad, which can be useful in determining whether a fatality was employment-related (although there are significant issues that arise in reporting cause of death).

In Pakistan, data on the number of deaths of migrant workers in destination countries also include a number of limitations and caveats. Namely, data are derived from community welfare attachés posted in Pakistani embassies or consulates in only nine destination countries.

Additionally, reports from a number of attachés were never received and thus not incorporated. Finally, numbers of reported deaths also included visitors, “such as tourists coming for religious pilgrimages” (Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, 2016). In Pakistan, data on fatalities are per the number of claims of death made to Pakistan’s State Life Emigrant Insurance Fund and thus may not reflect the actual number of fatalities (BE&OE, 2017).

The Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment also maintains a dataset of migrant worker fatalities abroad that is typically included as an annex to its annual statistical report. However, these data have not previously been made available online and are only available in the print version of the report, thus significantly limiting their degree of accessibility.

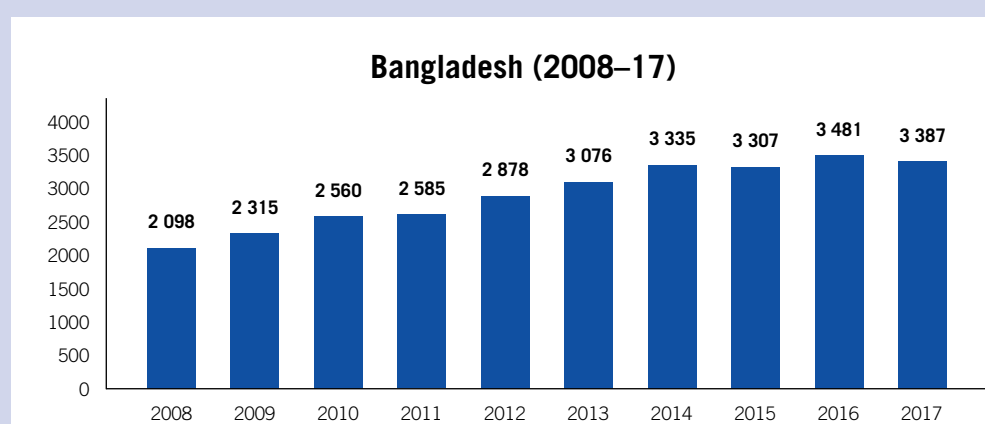
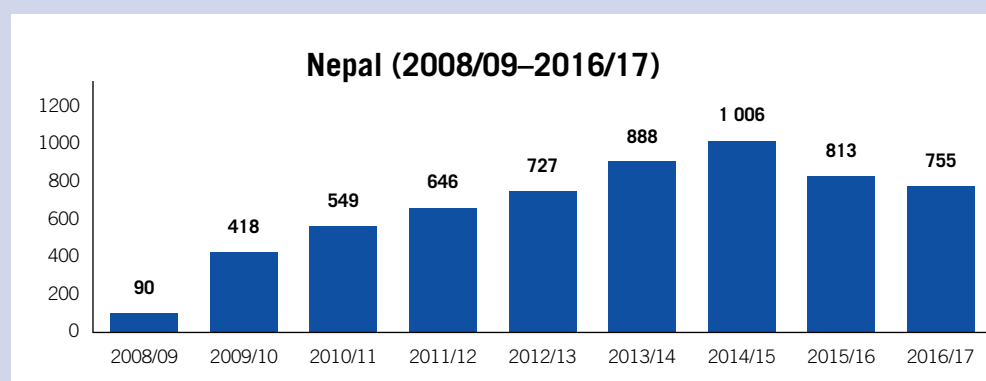
In Bangladesh, the Wage Earners’ Welfare Board (WEWB) under the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment has released data on migrant worker fatalities based on the number of bodies repatriated to three international airports in Bangladesh (Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka, Shak Amanat International Airport in Chittagong and Osmani International Airport in Sylhet), with data available since 2005. Of course, these data would also face a range of limitations and would likely be a significant underestimation of migrant worker fatalities, as they would not account for the remains of those migrant workers who were never repatriated from the country of destination, or who were repatriated over land (for example, from India to Bangladesh).

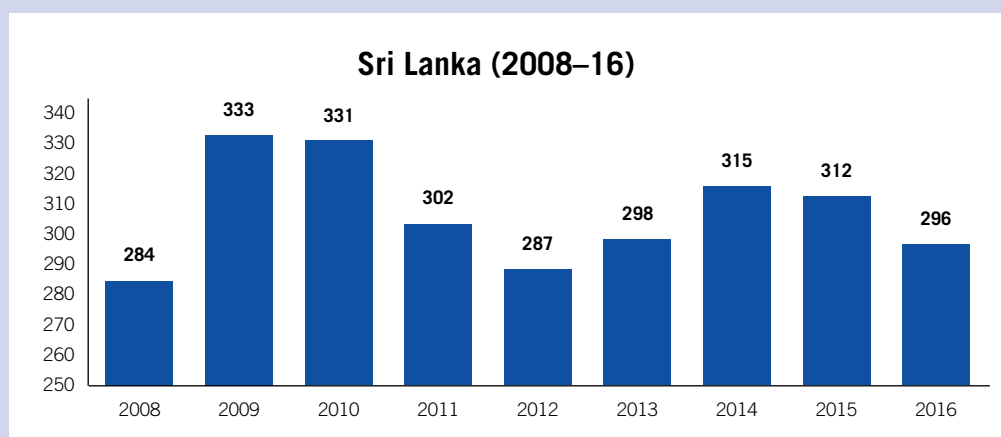
The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in India has confirmed that data on migrant worker fatalities are collected, based on registrations of fatalities at Indian embassies and consulates abroad. However, these data are not typically made publicly available. MEA did release a one-off data table on its website in response to a targeted inquiry in mid-2016, which included data on migrant fatalities disaggregated by country of destination for the period spanning 2013 to 2016 (although 2016 numbers only encompassed half of the year).⁷³ In total, MEA reported 6,329 deaths of Indian workers abroad in 2013, 6,564 in 2014 and 7,171 in 2015 (as data reported for 2016 were incomplete, they have not been mentioned in this report).

Figure 4.6 below shows official data on reported fatalities of migrant workers abroad for all reference years in which data were available between 2008 and 2017. Again, it is important to mention that an increase in the reported number of fatalities of migrants employed abroad in any country may not reflect an actual increase in fatalities, particularly if reporting was improved, or if data collection processes changed or improved between reference years.

73. These data may be found at that the following link:

<http://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/27172/QUESTION+NO1782+DEATH+OF+INDIAN+WORKERS+ABROAD> [accessed 01 Aug. 2018].

Figure 4.6**Recorded fatalities of nationals employed abroad, selected South Asian countries**



Note 1: Estimates for Nepal are based on fiscal year (e.g. 2008/09), beginning the 17 July and ending 16 July.

Note 2: An increase in the reported number of fatalities of migrants employed abroad in any country may not reflect an actual increase in fatalities, particularly if reporting was improved or data collection processes were changed or improved between reference years. Due to difficulties in reporting and information sharing between countries of destination and origin, and within countries of origin in South Asia, numbers in the above figures likely largely underestimate the actual number of fatalities of nationals employed abroad.

Note 3: Fatalities in Pakistan are according to number of insurance death claims.

Note 4: Data for 2017 in Pakistan are up to June only.

Note 5: Data for Bangladesh reflect repatriated remains by air to three international airports in the country.

Note 6: Data for 2017 were not yet publicly available at the time this report was written. 2016 published data are provisional.

Note 6: Many other news organizations, civil society actors and trade unions (amongst others) have released anecdotal numbers on South Asian migrant worker fatalities. However, only official data produced and released in South Asian origin countries are included in the above figure.

Sources: Nepal - *Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal: 2015/16 – 2016/17* (MLE, forthcoming); Pakistan – Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment, 'Statement showing death and disability claims for the period commenced from 2006 – 2017 (Up to June) (BE&OE, n.d.e.); Bangladesh – Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB), 'Year Wise Received Deceased Workers (Dead Bodies) at the Three (03) International Airports (From 2005 – 2018) (WEWB, n.d.a.); Sri Lanka – *Annual Statistical Report of Foreign Employment 2009, 2012, 2013 and 2016* (SLBFE, 2011; SLBFE, 2014; SLBFE, 2015; SLBFE 2018a).

4.4.10 Welfare fund payments paid out to the families of deceased migrant workers

(i) Migrant welfare fund programmes in context

In many instances, domestic protection and welfare services such as government assistance, workers' compensation or health insurance are often not available to nationals when they are residing and/or working outside of their countries of origin (Ruiz et. al., 2008). In instances where private actors may be reluctant to provide insurance services to migrants in destination countries, government-operated migrant welfare funds in origin countries financed by compulsory payments from migrants and/or recruitment agencies located in the origin country or contracting employers in destination countries "offers a potentially efficient and feasible solution to protecting migrants" (Ruiz et. al., 2008).

The principle countries of origin in South Asia all have migrant welfare funds that provide a range of services such as "orientation seminars, loans, emergency repatriation, life and medical insurance, and reintegration assistance" (Ruiz et. al., 2008). Some of these schemes are fairly new, while others have been active for over four decades. The Government of India established its Indian Community Welfare Fund in 2009, aimed at "assisting overseas Indian nationals in times of distress and emergency" in the "most deserving cases" on a "means tested basis" (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, n.d.i.). Sri Lanka's Overseas Workers Welfare Fund was formed by an Act of Parliament in 1985 (ILO, n.d.c.), coinciding with the formation of the Sri Lanka Bureau of

Foreign Employment (SLBFE), while the Wage Earner's Welfare Fund (WEWF) was established in Bangladesh in 1990 (Etzold and Mallick, 2015). In Pakistan, the Workers Welfare Fund has been in effect since 1971 (Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, 2016).

Having accurate and up-to-date data on welfare fund payments is imperative in understanding how and why migrant workers and their families are utilizing said welfare schemes, the size and scale of lump sum pay-outs from the scheme and the financial impact that welfare fund payments have on the livelihoods and well-being of families of deceased migrant workers. Lower overall pay-out compared to the instances of death or injury of migrants employed abroad may be indicative of barriers faced in filing claims or receiving pay-outs, or due to overall lack of information available to the claimants. An increase in total welfare fund payments each year may be indicative of a larger occurrence of migrant grievances, accidents and fatalities. However, it could also be due to structural changes in the welfare fund scheme itself, or due to increased availability of information to claimants and greater ease of access to these services.

(ii) Data on welfare fund payments to families of deceased migrants in South Asia

It is most likely that all South Asian countries with a welfare fund scheme also collect extensive data on total payments paid out on a variety of attributes such as repatriation, insurance, injury,

Table 4.8

Total welfare fund payments, selected South Asian countries

Nepal (2012/13 - 2016/17) (NPR)		Sri Lanka (2014 – 2017) (LKR)	
2012/13	98 645 000	2014	340 956 027
2013/14	-	2015	143 001 191
2014/15	216 860 000	2016	170 236 232
2015/16	251 191 957	2017	161 644 852
2016/17	228 760 000		
Pakistan (2012 – 2016) (PKR)		Bangladesh (2012 – 2016) (BDT)	
2012	296 805 000	2012	312 550 000
2013	400 805 000	2013	218 570 000
2014	701 411 166	2014	331 410 000
2015	557 079 999	2015	718 740 000
2016	797 784 720	2016	577 920 000
2017	430 947 339	2017	693 520 000

Note 1: No data on total welfare fund payments paid out to the families of deceased migrant workers abroad were reported for 2013/14 in Nepal.

Note 2: Estimates for Nepal are based on fiscal year (e.g. 2008/09), beginning the 17 July and ending 16 July.

Note 3: All payments are reflected in each country's local currency.

Note 4: Welfare fund payments for Sri Lanka encompass all pay-outs (including those not pertaining to fatalities). The ILO has been unable to obtain disaggregated data for pay-outs only for fatalities.

Note 5: Welfare fund payments in Bangladesh encompass the total amount dispersed on death compensation, regular dues, insurance and service benefits.

Sources: Pakistan – Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment 'Statement showing death and disability claims for the period commenced from 2006-2017 (Up to June)' (BE&OE, n.d.e); Nepal - *Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal: 2015/16 – 2016/17*, citing Foreign Employment Promotion Board (MLE, forthcoming); Sri Lanka – Bureau for Foreign Employment, 'No. of Insurance Claims received & Paid from 2013 to 2017' (SLBFE, 2018d); Bangladesh – Wage Earners' Welfare Board, 'Year Wise Number & Money (BDT) of Deceased Migrant Families Received as Death Compensation/Regular Dues/Insurance/Service Benefit (1997 to 2018)' (WEWB, n.d.b.).

disability and death. As of July 2018, the ILO has been able to obtain data on annual welfare fund payments from four countries – Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (albeit public release of data from Sri Lanka on the SLBFE website has been somewhat inconsistent).

Table 4.8 above shows total welfare fund payments paid out to the families of deceased migrant workers in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal for all available years since 2012. It is important to clarify that the welfare fund payments for Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal include only those payments made for migrant fatalities, while the data for Sri Lanka reflect total payouts for all claims received (e.g. for injury, illness and other grievances).

4.4.11 Additional variables in labour migration statistics

There are a wide range of additional attributes and thematic points associated with labour migration statistics that must be collected and relied upon in order to ensure effective evidence-based policy-making in South Asia. These include, but are certainly not limited to, data on recruitment costs borne by migrants, data on the health of migrant workers, data on the cause of fatality of migrant workers, data on educational attainment of nationals seeking employment abroad⁷⁴, data on repeat and return migration, on the economic activity of migrants abroad⁷⁵ and more. However, due to limitations in data availability and coverage, and lack of availability of official and/or government data on these themes and attributes in the subregion, they have not been discussed in this report, or yet included in the South Asia ILMS database.

Finally, the discussion on labour migration statistics in this report has been limited to those data produced and made available in origin countries. However, there are undoubtedly an abundance of valuable statistics on migrant workers from South Asia produced and maintained in destination countries that could fill a number of gaps in South Asian labour migration statistics, and provide a complementary or even more accurate picture of South Asian international migrant worker stocks and flows in countries of destination and at a global level.

74. Although table 16 in Module C of the ASEAN ILMS presents data on “outflows of nationals for employment by sex and education” (Stermsek, 2015), data on educational levels of migrant workers in administrative records produced in South Asia are typically not available. Educational attainment is classified by eight levels, from “Early childhood education” (level 0), to “Doctoral or equivalent level” (level 8) in the International Standard Classification of Education (2011).

75. Although table 17 in Module C of the ASEAN ILMS presents data on “outflows of nationals for employment by economic activity” (Stermsek, 2015), the South Asian ILMS does not currently present this information due to lack of data availability.



05

CONCLUSION: EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY-MAKING FOR LABOUR MIGRATION OUT OF SOUTH ASIA

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5.1 Data as an underlying need in labour migration governance

The reliance on low- and semi-skilled foreign labour in the Middle East and South-East Asia shows signs of continuing, at least in the short-term (GIZ and ILO, 2015). In addition, many highly skilled South Asian migrants also move to developed regions directly for employment, or as students who enter through an ‘academic gate’ and often remain in countries of destination as skilled workers upon completion of studies (Khadria, 2005).

Continued opportunities for employment abroad represent an important opportunity for South Asian workers. However, with the variety of challenges and vulnerabilities that low-skilled and semi-skilled migrants in particular often face – including within the recruitment process, fair wages and working hours, safe working conditions and more, South Asian governments must continually focus on ensuring decent work for South Asians working outside of the subregion, in line with their national priorities, the SAARC agenda on labour migration and the global policy agenda.

South Asian governments may employ a number of migration governance and policy initiatives to protect the interests of their nationals employed abroad, including: (1) pre-departure training; (2) regulation of private recruitment agencies; (3) bilateral Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) on labour migration between South Asian countries and destination countries abroad; (4) model employment contracts; (5) labour attaches and consular functions; (6) imposition of minimum wages for migrant workers abroad; (7) trade union networking; (8) ratifying relevant UN conventions; (9) establishing welfare funds and insurance schemes for migrant workers abroad; and (10) eliminating restrictions preventing specific groups of nationals from seeking employment abroad (Wickramasekara, 2011). Many of these and other initiatives are being implemented to varied degrees of scope and success in the subregion.

However, as this report has shown, one particular initiative that still requires a large degree of cooperative improvement in the subregion is ethical and secure data collection and dissemination, which is not only an important operation in itself, but can also provide some of the evidence needed to formulate these aforementioned policy mechanisms. Simultaneously, it is important to acknowledge that policy is influenced not only by data, but also by a wide array of other social and political factors. As such, improved labour migration statistics should also be accompanied by other evidence-based quantitative and qualitative mechanisms for informing policy-making.

5.2 Subregional recommendations

The processes of: (1) composing this report; (2) collecting data and establishing a South Asian ILMS database; and (3) formal and informal consultations with government agencies, researchers and practitioners in the subregion have uncovered a number of important gaps in labour migration statistical scope and coverage, collection, uniformity and availability.

The following recommendations outline ways in which collection and dissemination of labour migration statistics in South Asia can be improved, ways in which there can be better coordination between producers of labour migration statistics, as well as advice on how data can be utilized in more effective ways to influence evidence-based policies on labour migration.

These recommendations are directed towards subregional level intergovernmental bodies such as SAARC, as well as South Asian governments, the agencies working on labour migration and national statistics offices (NSOs). These recommendations are considered subregional in that they are initiatives that could be applied universally in each South Asian country and are not unique to only one country or group of countries. The country-level recommendations presented in Section 5.3 are relevant only in the identified country and do not apply to all countries in the South Asian subregion.

(a) National working committees on international labour migration statistics

- Within countries, statistical users and producers would benefit from establishing working committees composed of statistics agencies, foreign employment agencies and other government bodies that collect labour migration statistics. Representatives from each agency would attend working committee meetings, ideally on an annual basis, to strategize about data improvement, identify and establish plans to fill definitional and methodological gaps, outline areas for improvement and share best practices.
- NSOs in each country may be best placed to serve as coordinators of these proposed national committees, and the ILO, amongst other collaborative activities with the NSOs, could work directly with them to help design national working committee meetings and meeting outputs.
- Each working committee would ideally appoint one individual focal point who then shares the results of these meetings in a thorough and precise brief with other country working groups and with organizations working in labour migration policy, practice and research in the subregion, including ILO, IOM, UN ESCAP, UNESCO and the SAARC Secretariat.

(b) Timely and accurate reporting in accessible formats

- All countries in the subregion would benefit significantly from accurate and timely reporting of data. This includes making relevant data available and useable in online platforms. In some countries in the subregion, the current lag time in data publication is sometimes nearly two years. Some countries in South Asia publish available data on a monthly basis in downloadable datasets. Without commenting on the quality of data or the range of variables covered, this should be taken as a best practice for other agencies in the subregion. Countries would benefit from releasing preliminary data and provisional estimates when available if estimates are not yet finalized. Should preliminary or provisional estimates be released, agencies and custodians of labour

migration statistics should make every effort to validate and check these numbers so that final estimates can be released. Should provisional estimates for any reference year or attribute be published, the agency responsible would ideally communicate the expected date for when final estimates are to be released.

- When data are published online, they are often inserted in inaccessible or hard-to-reach sub-tabs on statistical agency websites. Often, when users are able to locate the data, they must query for one individual variable or attribute at one time, or query for each year separately. Having data combined into one downloadable file that includes all reference years together would greatly assist in the expediency of data review and analysis.
- Data on statistical websites are often presented as .pdf or .jpeg images, which are extremely difficult for statisticians and researchers to use, as they cannot be imported into data analysis platforms without performing manual data entry, thus creating room for user error. Providing data in manipulable datasets would better assist the needs of all statistical users in the subregion.
- Users should not be made to combine data from two separate datasets in order to derive a total (e.g., total annual outflows/registrations). Data should be validated and approved before publishing, and disaggregated numbers should add up to the reported total throughout (e.g., outflows to individual countries when combined should equal the total outflows reported elsewhere in datasets). If there are discrepancies, these should be clearly noted and explained.

(c) Country-level annual statistical reports, with greater transparency in caveats and limitations

- Each South Asian country would benefit from composing annual reports that combine and analyse labour migration statistics from all relevant agencies. These annual reports are an important starting place for policy-makers and researchers in gaining knowledge on important labour migration trends. Some South Asian countries, including Nepal and Pakistan, have released detailed annual statistical reports in recent years that outline emerging data and trends in labour migration abroad, based on data produced by a variety of agencies in each country.
- In addition to covering most recent data and trends in said reports and datasets, agencies should make every effort to communicate the size and scope of the population covered, as well as any caveats or limitations, definitions and reference periods used, and any possible errors in data collection. Often, statistical agencies in the subregion publish comprehensive datasets and statistical reports online without describing the types of migrants who may or may not be included in the collection process, or without specifying whether data collection processes have changed over time, and whether or not this has an effect on the comparability of data between reference years.

(d) High-level technical meetings on international labour migration statistics at the regional level

- In order to ensure that there is further dialogue for improvement and information sharing in the subregion, high-level meetings bringing together labour migration and

statistics experts from a number of organizations in South Asian countries should be conducted on a semi-regular basis (e.g. every couple of years). A sustainable model for these high-level meetings could be their inclusion in the agendas of regional platforms and consultative processes, including the SAARC Technical Committee on Labour Migration, the Colombo Process, or the Abu Dhabi Dialogue.

(e) Adopting international statistical standards and common migration indicators

- As Section 4 of this report has outlined, there are still considerable disparities in the systems of classifications used by various agencies in South Asian countries. Without the use of common international standards and classifications of attributes such as education, economic activity, occupation and skill level – e.g. as referenced in ISCO, ISCE, ISCED and ISIC – it will not be possible to compare statistics produced between countries. This in turn would limit the ability to conduct trends analysis at a subregional level, and hinder the ability for South Asian countries and SAARC to formulate a common regional evidence-based labour migration policy framework.
- Beyond the use of international classification standards, a common minimal list of indicators (variables) should be explored for collection within South Asian countries on at least an annual basis. This will lead to having a common set of migration-related questions to be adopted in household surveys and population censuses.
- NSOs in particular, in addition to other custodians of administrative records in the subregion, would benefit from training sessions and capacity-building exercises focused on how to update current data collection processes and administrative records to reflect international standards and classifications, with the goal of enhancing the technical competencies of these organizations.

(f) Cooperation with countries of destination

- While the current South Asian ILMS database focuses on labour migration data produced within the subregion, there may also be relevant data outside of the region. There are a number of additional challenges that arise amidst cooperating between regions, and possible barriers to information disclosure, as well as lack of availability of relevant statistics even in destination countries. However, as an initiative to be implemented on a longer-term, interacting with statistics and immigration agencies in destination countries who produce information on inflows and stocks of migrant workers could help to close important gaps in knowledge.

(g) Return migration

- To better understand the challenges that return migrants face, and understand how they can be economically and socially reintegrated in origin societies (and contribute to growth and development), there should be a greater focus on developing data on inflows of return migrants to South Asian origin countries, as well as return migrant attributes.
- South Asian governments can improve information collection on return migration by including relevant questions on return migrants particularly in Labour Force Surveys, and also population census questionnaires. Some countries in South Asia may also

consider implementing special sample surveys at a national level to monitor return migration, provided that the correct scientific sampling procedures are utilized. Overall, the highly detailed questions included on Bangladesh's census questionnaire may serve as a model for other countries in the subregion.

(h) Female labour migration

- Women migrant workers face restrictions in accessing opportunities for safe and regular labour migration, as well as a number of protection gaps in origin, transit and destination countries. Improved data on the total number of female migrant workers departing each South Asian origin country, as well as further data on their countries of destination, skill levels, occupation and methods of recruitment could inform better policy-making on how to increase their opportunities and best ensure the rights and safety of women migrant workers abroad, while providing evidence on whether measures introduced to ostensibly protect women are having the desired effect.

(i) Informal remittance flows

- South Asia receives the second-largest inflows of remittances in the world, and recorded absolute remittance inflows to the subregion continue to increase overall. However, little is known about the size and scale of informal remittances. Better data on informal remittance flows, as well as quantitative research on the reasons for which migrants choose to send money through informal channels – including but not limited to transaction costs, additional fees charged by banking institutions and other policy barriers – would be extremely useful in understanding how to maximize the development potential of remittances in the subregion. A long-term goal may be the implementation of special sample surveys in South Asian countries to determine the role, scale and reasons for informal remittance transfers to the subregion.

(j) Redesigning population surveys, Labour Force Surveys and census questionnaires to reflect international migration

- As Section 4.1 has shown, while some countries in the subregion are including questions on international migration in Labour Force Surveys and censuses, particularly in regards to previous residence, there are still gaps in survey schedules in the inclusion of questions on household members abroad, the location of these household members and their respective labour market attributes, including educational attainment and skill level (see Appendix VII, as well as the United Nations' *Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses* (UNDESA, 2017c) and *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (Rev 3)* (UNDESA, 2015f) on recommended migration modules to be included in population and housing surveys).

(k) Collecting data on additional migrant attributes

There is a myriad of additional attributes on migrant workers departing South Asia that could be captured in population surveys, censuses and administrative records. In the medium-term, statistical agencies and foreign employment agencies in particular could integrate additional

questions in the registration process for nationals seeking employment abroad. Some examples of additional attributes include:

- Repeat vs. first-time migration – whether or not the individual has been employed abroad before, or whether this is the first time that the individual has migrated. Prior migration experience has consequences in terms of method of recruitment, cost of recruitment, protection measures and more.
- Migrant recruitment costs – while numerous regional and global policy agendas focus on reducing the direct and indirect costs that migrants pay in the process of recruitment, there are limited government administrative records in South Asia that currently collect data on recruitment costs. Additional data on the estimated costs that the applicant has paid in the process of recruitment would be a valuable tool to inform policies on recruitment agencies and foreign employers in countries of origin, and would also monitor the extent to which policies are applied.
- Migrant wages – while it may be difficult to track the actual wage earned by a national employed abroad once he or she has arrived in the country of destination, South Asian countries would benefit from producing and maintaining official administrative records on the wages promised to nationals departing for employment abroad each year. This should be linked to skill level and occupation, to inform policy on minimum referral wages and skills training programmes.
- Occupation and status in employment of nationals in origin countries prior to migration, as well as the occupation and status in employment of nationals once they have arrived in destination countries – in order to track whether migrant workers were employed or unemployed prior to migration, as well as any instances of de-skilling of migrants in destination countries.

(l) Review procedures for the registration of nationals departing for employment abroad

- In order to improve the data accuracy of migrant worker outflows from the subregion, South Asian countries and administrative bodies within these countries could focus on methods of incentivizing nationals to register prior to departure, while also increasing the scope and coverage.
- One way in which this can be achieved is through reducing the costs and minimizing the complexities associated with migration and with registration (ILO, 2015a). Administrative bodies may also incentivize nationals departing for employment abroad to register by offering information and protections to those that do register, including: information and advice on migrant workers' rights and legal obligations, as well as financial literacy training, insurance schemes and more (ILO, 2015a).

(m) Improve data collection to meet goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- The Declaration on the 2030 Agenda recognizes “the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development” (UNDESA, 2015e). Beyond a recognition of the development potential of migration, the Sustainable Development Goals acknowledge the specific vulnerability of migrant workers. In line with the pledge to “leave no one behind”, ‘migratory status’ is an overarching disaggregation variable in the target of data collection (Target 17.18) (UNDESA, n.d.c.), which will allow for

better evidence on the extent to which migrants are benefitting from policies and programmes on health, education, labour rights and more.

- There is a need for national statistical offices and line ministries to develop the methodologies and build capacity for measuring the key migration-related indicators to establish a baseline and monitoring of progress towards the SDGs. These include SDGs 8.8 on decent work, 10.7 on safe, regular and orderly migration and 10.c on remittances, among others. There is scope for sharing of experiences among countries in South Asia on how these data can be collected.

5.3 Country-level recommendations^{76,77}

The following section presents country-specific recommendations.

Afghanistan

- There is a lack of reliable data on any and all demographic characteristics of Afghanistan's population. Unfortunately, war and conflict have continued to prevent the conduct of the second population census (Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, 2018), which could shed light on dynamics of international migration in the country, particularly in regard to emigration and return migration (which are particularly relevant in a context of large-scale displacement within and outside of Afghanistan, as well as large-scale returns from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran in recent years). The Afghan Government is currently limited to producing population estimates – including for 2017-18 – through statistical extrapolation on base year population estimates from the 1979 census and a 2003-2005 Household Listing (HHL) (Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization, 2018).
- Afghanistan would benefit from continued technical and financial support from international organizations, NGOs and other institutions in conducting sample surveys and other smaller-scale demographic surveys. Given the current difficulties of conducting a full population and housing census in the country, smaller-scale population surveys like the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) (known as the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey) can shed light on important developments in population trends, as well as trends in international migration. Other surveys, such as the province-level Socio-Demographic and Economic Survey (SDES) in the country – a long-term project carried out by the Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization (CSO) with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) – can also present important information on migration, labour market attributes, sex, literacy, birth, mortality and other variables (UNFPA, 2016).
- Should the resources be made available, Afghanistan would benefit from systematic migration data collection through a “holistic migration survey” on a biannual basis (IOM, 2014).

76. As Bhutan is not an ILO member State, it has not been included in the set of country-level recommendations.

77. Recommendations are focused on the themes and data sources already discussed in this report. Due to these focused parameters, there are likely a number of important and relevant themes that are not included in this section, but that would be useful for improving collection on labour migration statistics in the subregion.

- In areas of significant gaps in data availability in Afghanistan, data produced on international migrant populations in significant destination countries of Afghan migrants and refugees can provide additional information on Afghan nationals abroad, including their labour market and employment characteristics.

Bangladesh

- While Bangladesh has included a number of important and valuable questions on various population and housing surveys – including questions on international migration in its Quarterly Labour Force Survey and its population and housing census – these modules could be further developed to collect information on additional migrant attributes and their economic characteristics. Additionally, existing and additional modules should be reviewed to align with all international standard classifications.
- Although Bangladesh does include a module on international migration in its Quarterly Labour Force Survey, the current survey schedule does not ask respondents important questions on nationality/citizenship, birthplace, or on household members abroad, but rather if the respondent's previous residence was a different country. Including questions on birthplace and country of citizenship will be helpful in understanding labour migration dynamics in Bangladesh's workforce. Particularly given that the country's 2011 population and housing census included a comprehensive and well-designed module on household members abroad, as well as return migrants, Bangladesh would benefit from incorporating aspects of its census migration module in other population surveys, including its LFS.
- An analysis of current availability of data in the South Asian ILMS database on labour migration out of Bangladesh from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training reveals a number of significant gaps in data collection and availability:
 - o Data on nationals departing for employment abroad by sex and country of destination are relatively complete. However, in data on country of destination, BMET currently has a significant portion of all migrants who have registered grouped into the category "others". As such, for third-party researchers and organizations relying on this dataset for information, the country of destination of a significant number of nationals registering for employment abroad is unclear. Data could be made more transparent by disaggregating the "others" category in the dataset to reflect every country of destination of all individuals who register.
 - o In the same dataset, many individuals registering for employment abroad are categorized under "miscellaneous clearance" (BMET, 2016; n.d.a.). No technical notes are currently available to specify what the term "miscellaneous clearance" entails. Additionally, the country of destination of these particular individuals is also unknown.
 - o Data on skill level for Bangladesh (produced by BMET) is very complete. However, the skill level classifications used do not reflect the ISCO-08 categories between 1 and 4. In addition, skill-wise data on Bangladeshis registering for employment abroad also includes an "others" column in the dataset. Over time, it would be ideal to align skill level classifications with international standards, while eliminating the "others" category and instead aiming to categorize the skill level of each individual who registers.

- o No official Government administrative records on nationals employed abroad in Bangladesh currently exist for: economic activity, method of recruitment, occupation, or division of origin. If data on these aforementioned attributes do exist, they are not collected in an official dataset or released for public use. These gaps in data collection illustrate important areas where the country could focus on the collection of additional attributes of nationals departing the country for employment.
- For all the aforementioned attributes, greater transparency on the specific populations covered, and any caveats and limitations should be provided, whether in the form of an annual statistical report, or in detailed technical notes published alongside datasets.

India

- As the most prominent country of origin in South Asia, India is an important actor in data collection and evidence-based policy-making on international labour migration in the subregion. The country undoubtedly collects extensive information on migrant worker outflows and on specific migrant attributes. However, data availability is currently lacking in a number of crucial areas, and large quantities of data that are likely collected are not made available for public use. As this report has discussed, certain policies limit the scope and coverage of labour migration statistics currently maintained in Government and official administrative records.
- India's population census (per the 2011 household schedule) currently possesses a migration module that inquires as to birthplace and place of last residence (either within India or outside of India), the reason for migration (both internal or international) and the length of time the individual has resided in the town where he or she is residing at the time of census enumeration. However, no questions regarding household members abroad, the location of household members abroad, or returned household members are currently included in the survey schedule. Adding relevant questions on these themes can greatly increase the information that can be gathered on Indian nationals living abroad. Additionally, India would benefit from ensuring that existing and additional modules are aligned with all international standard classifications.
- Currently, India's Labour Force Survey (Employment and Unemployment Survey) does not inquire as to the respondent's previous residence, country of birth, citizenship, or other related themes of international migration. As such, it does not appear to be possible to collect information on migrants in this particular survey. This represents a significant gap that can be addressed rather quickly and effectively through the addition of a migration module in the LFS survey schedule.
- An analysis of current availability of data in the South Asian ILMS on labour migration out of India reveals significant opportunities and gaps in data on migrant worker outflows available from the Overseas Employment Division in the Ministry of External Affairs:
 - o Policy constraints that limit the registration of migrant workers to a certain group of individuals would appear to contribute to the largest gap in data collection. As discussed in Section 4, only Indian nationals classified as 'Emigration Clearance Required' are required to register. Other nationals who are classified as 'Emigration

Clearance Not Required’ are not required to register prior to departure and are thus not being captured in Government administrative records. Over time, it would be beneficial to implement a system that is able to capture data on all migrant workers departing the country, so that data are more accurate and complete.⁷⁸ Additionally, Indian nationals are currently only required to register if they are obtaining employment in 17 specific ECR countries, making data less representative of all Indians departing each year.

- o While India does make data available on total outflows of nationals for employment, complete sex disaggregation is not available. As this report has discussed, outflows data on female migrant workers published online only encompass female emigrants from the top 25 districts, and exclude certain occupations. However, it is recommended that MEA release total outflows data for all males and females each year for a more complete picture of labour migration out of the country.
- o Although data on method of recruitment are available – either through recruitment agency or individual employment – there are no data on sex disaggregation by method of recruitment. It is recommended that if data on the sex of migrants registering for employment abroad disaggregated by method of recruitment are available, that the dataset be made publicly available. If these data are not currently collected, this represents a significant opportunity where data collection can be expanded.
- o No official (public) administrative records on migrant workers currently exist for: skill level, economic activity, occupation, migrant fatalities (with the exception of three reference years released in a one-off dataset by MEA), or welfare fund payments to the families of deceased migrants. If data on these aforementioned attributes do exist, they are not collected in an official dataset or released for public use. These gaps in data collection illustrate important areas where the Government can improve the depth of information collected on Indian nationals seeking employment abroad. For any of these aforementioned variables – particularly skill level, economic activity, or occupation – the relevant international standard classifications should be utilized.
- Currently, the Ministry of External Affairs publishes data on the agency’s E-migrate website (<https://emigrate.gov.in/ext/preViewPdfGenRptAction.action>). However, users must query for only one variable and one reference year at a time. For expediency’s sake, ease of data analysis and overall user experience, it would be beneficial to present data in one single downloadable dataset with all available reference years.
- India would benefit from producing an annual statistical report that combines and analyses available data on migrant workers from all relevant agencies, as an important resource for outlining recent and long-term developments and trends to be used by interested parties in both the public and private sectors.

78. An August 2018 report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour on overseas employment of women workers revealed that data is now being shared by the Ministry of Home Affairs on ECNR migrants with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Moreover, MEA has reportedly begun a mandatory registration of ECNR migrants going to the 17 ECR countries for employment purposes, on a pilot basis.

- As with other countries, detailed technical notes on coverage, caveats, methodologies and limitations would be helpful in establishing transparency in India's labour migration statistics.

Maldives

- Given the significant number of new labour market entrants – both domestic and international – in the country, Maldives would benefit immensely from investing in labour market, migration and population surveys in the country – in addition to the population census – in order to capture more detailed information on various attributes of the foreign-born population. This in turn can produce more up-to-date information and close information gaps during intercensal periods.
- Currently, no framework exists in Maldives to capture data on Maldivian nationals departing the country for employment abroad. Although the scale of migration out of Maldives is quite limited, the country would benefit from establishing a framework to capture these individuals in administrative records.

Nepal

- Although Nepal has recently introduced a migration module in its LFS survey schedule, the country would benefit from additional questions on household members abroad (emigration), as well as the country of destination. This may help to identify migrants residing in neighbouring countries such as India, as well as their employment attributes. Likewise, there are no questions on location of household members abroad or a specific module on return migration included in the migration module in the country's census questionnaire. Nepal would also benefit from enhancing the current migration module in its population and housing census to collect additional information on emigrants and on return migrants. Many of these individuals may not currently be captured in administrative records in the country, thus helping to fill an important gap in international migration data and migrant worker data in Nepal. Any existing and additional modules should be aligned with all international standard classifications.
- Some agencies in Nepal are collecting data on labour migration based on a fiscal year basis, while others are collecting data on a calendar year basis. As this report has shown, some agencies even collect and release data based on both timeframes. This creates difficulties for policy-makers and researchers when understanding and comparing numbers and trends. It is recommended that the Government of Nepal and other Nepali agencies collecting data on labour migration mirror other countries in the subregion by collecting and presenting data on a calendar-year basis.
- The Government of Nepal, with support from the ILO, IOM and the Asia Foundation, has been releasing a comprehensive and informative statistical report on a bi-annual basis that summarizes important data and trends in international labour migration. In the two years between the release of said statistical report, data availability is rather scarce, and it is difficult to locate datasets on the relevant agency website. As is the case with a number of other countries in the region, Nepal could make monthly migrant worker outflow data, as well as data on migrant worker attributes, available in downloadable and manipulable datasets on the relevant agency websites, to improve the timely reporting of labour migration statistics.

- An analysis of current availability of data in the South Asian ILMS database on labour migration out of Nepal reveals significant opportunities and gaps in data on migrant worker outflows:
 - o Most data on total outflows as well as disaggregated migrant worker attributes in Nepal are separated by method of recruitment – as such, one dataset only encompasses migrants who obtained employment on an individual basis, while another will reflect data on the same variable (e.g. total outflows, sex, origin province) but for those departing through recruitment agency. This creates significant difficulties for analysts, researchers and other interested parties who must then combine numbers from two separate datasets in order to derive overall totals. Additionally, when disaggregated data are combined together they typically do not reflect total outflows (registrations) data reported elsewhere in Nepali datasets. Even then, the total annual outflows (registrations) reported sometimes differ for the same reference year between datasets.
 - o Currently, total outflow data of Nepali nationals do not include those Nepali migrant workers who were employed in the Republic of Korea. For outflow data on Nepali workers in the Republic of Korea, users must reference a separate dataset. Nepal would benefit from releasing total outflows for all countries of destination in one single dataset.
 - o Within data on country of destination provided by the Ministry of Labour and Employment (Department of Foreign Employment), a significant portion of all migrants who have registered are grouped into destination categories such as “Africa”, “West-Indies”, “Taiwan”, “Saipan”, “Kosovo”, “Kango” and “Others”. However, these aforementioned names for countries/areas/territories are either unclear (in terms of the area covered) or do not reflect official country/area/territory names established by the United Nations. Agencies in Nepal would benefit from aligning countries of destination in administrative records with official country/area/territory designations with those utilized by the United Nations.
 - o The Ministry of Labour and Employment recently began collecting and releasing data on skill level of Nepali nationals registering for employment abroad; however, the skill level classifications used do not reflect the ISCO-08 categories between 1 and 4. Over time, it would be ideal to align skill level classifications with international standards.
 - o Although Nepal collects data on occupation, the number of categories employed in its datasets are so extensive that it is not currently possible to input these data into the ILMS database. Additionally, categories do not follow international occupation classifications outlined in ISCO-08. Nepal would benefit from aligning the data collected on occupation of migrant workers with international standards, while also releasing a dataset that groups all occupations into one of the 10 major ISCO-08 categories.
 - o No official (public) Government administrative records on nationals employed abroad in Nepal currently exist for: economic activity (among other variables not included in the ILMS). If data on this aforementioned attribute do exist, they are not collected in an official dataset or released for public use. This gap in data collection

illustrates an important area where Nepal can improve the depth of information collected on its nationals seeking employment abroad.

- Particularly in Nepal, where numerous Government agencies (e.g. the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Foreign Employment Promotion Board and the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training) are working in matters of international labour migration, continued coordination and collaboration between agencies – including in matters of data collection and dissemination – is encouraged (Nepal Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2016). Nepal would benefit from an internal coordinating mechanism such as a working committee (such as the one proposed in Section 5.2, recommendation (a)) to share and combine data, share best practices and plan for future improvements and further data collection.

Pakistan

- Currently, Pakistan's LFS inquires as to inter/intraprovincial migration and rural-urban migration (see Appendix V), and respondents are able to specify whether their place of previous residence was a different country. However, the survey schedule does not include any questions on return migration, birthplace, citizenship, or household members abroad. As such, Pakistan would benefit from modifying its LFS survey schedule to include additional relevant questions on international migration.
- Additionally, the migration module in Pakistan's population and housing census could also be updated to include additional relevant questions. Although the survey schedule does inquire as to any household members abroad, it does not ask respondents to specify the location of household members abroad, and it does not include a module on return migrants.
- In Pakistan, numerous Government agencies collect relevant data on labour migration, including the State Bank of Pakistan, the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, the Overseas Employment Corporation and the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation, amongst others. The Government of Pakistan acknowledges that "due to lack of coordination between these ministries and bodies, migration statistics are incomplete and time-consuming to collect" (Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, 2016). Pakistan would benefit from an internal coordinating mechanism such as a working committee (like the one proposed in Section 5.2) to share and combine data, share best practices, plan for future improvements and initiate further data collection.
- In Pakistan, BE&OE collects data based on calendar year, while the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) data is collected based on a fiscal year basis between 1 July and 30 June of the following year. To assist in data uniformity in-country and with the rest of the subregion, Pakistan would benefit from ensuring that all relevant agencies are collecting data on a calendar-year basis.
- Although data on migrant worker outflows and migrant worker attributes in Pakistan are quite complete, an analysis of current data availability in the South Asian ILMS reveals some areas where data collection could be improved:
 - o The largest area for improvement in statistics on migrant workers outflows in Pakistan is on the sex disaggregation of migrant workers. Although the BE&OE

has collected sex-disaggregated data since 2008, it does not publish these data (Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, 2016). For greater transparency, and in order to provide a more accurate picture of migrant worker outflows, BE&OE would benefit from publishing data on the sex of migrant workers.

- o Although encompassing a very limited number of migrant workers abroad, Pakistan employs country/area/territory destinations such as “West Africa” and “Gen-Island” in datasets, which are not reflective of official United Nations designations. Agencies in Pakistan would benefit from aligning countries of destination in administrative records with official country/area/territory designations utilized by the United Nations.
- o Skill level data in Pakistan is very complete. However, the skill level classifications used do not reflect the ISCO-08 categories between 1 and 4. Over time, it would be ideal to align skill level classifications with international standards.
- o As Section 4.3 discussed, Pakistan collects a comprehensive dataset on the occupations of nationals registering for employment abroad, which does not follow international standard classifications outlined in ISCO-08. Pakistan would benefit from aligning the data collected on occupation of migrant workers with international standards, while also releasing a dataset that groups all occupations into one of the 10 major ISCO categories.
- o No official (public) Government administrative records on nationals employed abroad in Pakistan currently exist for: sex, economic activity or method of recruitment. These gaps in data collection illustrate important areas where Pakistan can improve the depth of information collected on its nationals seeking employment abroad. For any of these aforementioned variables, the relevant international standard classifications should be utilized.

Sri Lanka

- Although Sri Lanka collects and publishes extensive data on migrant workers departing the country, data are frequently not published on a timely basis. Published data for 2016 (as of July 2018) are still provisional and were not released until mid-2018 in the form of a statistical report. Up until mid-2018, only provisional estimates from 2015 were published online by the Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE). SLBFE has recently made efforts to improve data availability, releasing individual datasets for 2017 online (previously data had only been released in the form of a statistical report) in early 2018. However, individual datasets are not available for prior years, and 2017 data that were available online as of July 2018 were still provisional. Sri Lanka would benefit from mirroring the practices of other countries in South Asia by releasing data on migrant worker outflows and migrant worker attributes on a monthly basis, in downloadable and manipulable datasets, and retroactively adding these datasets for previous years.
- The Government of Sri Lanka would benefit from an internal coordinating mechanism such as a working committee (like the one proposed in Section 5.2) to share and combine data, share best practices and plan for future improvements and further data collection.

- The Ministry of Employment publishes an annual statistical report that combines and analyses available data on migrant workers from relevant agencies such as SLBFE and SLFEA. The most recent report publicly available is from 2016. As such, this process can be improved by ensuring that an updated report that presents detailed trends and analysis is released each year. Within this report, all relevant datasets could be included as an annex to the report. Said report should also be accompanied by detailed technical notes on coverage, caveats, methodologies and limitations, in order to establish greater transparency and clarity in Sri Lanka's administrative records on labour migration statistics.
- Currently, Sri Lanka's Labour Force Survey does not inquire as to the respondent's previous residence, country of birth, citizenship, or other related themes of international migration. As such, it does not appear to be possible to collect information on migrants in this particular survey. This represents a significant gap that can be addressed rather quickly and effectively through the addition of questions on international migration in the LFS survey schedule.
- The migration module included in Sri Lanka's census questionnaire is also quite limited at present, with no questions included on household members abroad, location of household members abroad, or return migrants. Adding relevant questions on these themes can greatly increase the information that can be gathered on Sri Lankan emigrants, including migrant workers.
- Sri Lanka would benefit from ensuring that existing and additional modules in the population census and in other population surveys are aligned with all relevant international standard classifications.
- An analysis of current availability of data in the South Asian ILMS on labour migration out of Sri Lanka reveals significant opportunities and gaps in data on migrant worker outflows:
 - o Within the current 20-year reference period of the South Asian ILMS database (1997 – 2017), there are a number of gaps in data availability for specific reference years, as a result of sporadic publication of statistical reports. Often, data can only be located in print-form in statistical reports from prior years, thus reducing accessibility.
 - o Skill level data in Sri Lanka is very complete. However, the skill level classifications used do not reflect the ISCO-08 categories between 1 and 4. Over time, it would be ideal to align skill level classifications with international standards. Additionally, agencies in Sri Lanka use the term 'Man Power' to designate skill level; however, to reflect international terminologies, Sri Lanka should change the term to 'skill level'.
 - o Until mid-2018, data on occupation of nationals registering for employment abroad did not reflect ISCO-08 standards, and many codes and classifications were unique to Sri Lanka. The number of categories utilized was extensive and thus prevented the inclusion of occupational data in the South Asian ILMS database. However, SLBFE has recently completed coding its occupational datasets with ISCO-08 classifications and is able to produce a dataset on occupation of Sri Lankan nationals departing for employment abroad according to the 10 major occupational categories established in ISCO-08.

- o No official (public) Government administrative records on nationals employed abroad in Sri Lanka currently exist for: economic activity. This is an important area where Sri Lanka can improve the depth of information collected on its nationals seeking employment abroad.
- o While data on migrant fatalities do exist, they are not published online, but rather in printed statistical reports. To improve accessibility and transparency, it is recommended that SLBFE make data on migrant fatalities available for download on its website.



APPENDICES

Appendix I: Key concepts and definitions

Economic activity

Refers to the category of work realized by the employer. Economic activity is classified internationally by the United Nations in the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC, Rev.4), which covers 21 categories classified in lettered 'sections' between A (Agriculture, forestry and fishing) and U (Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies).⁷⁹

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

"The category of international investment that reflects the objective of a resident entity in one economy to obtain lasting interest in an enterprise resident in another economy."⁸⁰

Irregular Migration

"Movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries. There is no clear or universally accepted definition of irregular migration. From the perspective of destination countries, it is entry, stay or work in a country without the necessary authorization or documents required under immigration regulations. From the perspective of the sending country, the irregularity is for example seen in cases in which a person crosses an international boundary without a valid passport or travel document or does not fulfil the administrative requirements for leaving the country".⁸¹

Job

"A set of tasks and duties performed, or meant to be performed, by one person, including for an employer or in self-employment."⁸²

Long-term Migrant

"A person who moves to a country other than that of his/her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination becomes his/her new country of usual residence."⁸³

79. UNSD, International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (Rev. 4), 2008.

80. OECD, Glossary of Statistical Terms, 'Foreign Direct Investment', 2001.

81. IOM, Key Migration Terms, n.d.a.

82. ILO, International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), 2008.

83. UNDESA, Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration: Revision 1, 1998.

84. UNDESA, Toolkit of International Migration, 2012.

Migrant stocks

Refers to the total number of international migrants present in a given country at a particular point in time who have ever changed their country of usual residence.⁸⁴

Migrant worker

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.⁸⁵

Migration flows

Refers to the number of international migrants arriving in a country (immigrants) or the number of international migrants departing from a country (emigrants) over the course of a specific period.⁸⁶

Occupation

Refers to the kind of work performed in a job. The concept of occupation is defined as a set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterized by a high degree of similarity. A person may be associated with an occupation through the main job currently held, a second job, a future job or a job previously held.⁸⁷

Official Development Assistance (ODA)

“Those flows to countries and territories on the DAC List of ODA Recipients and to multilateral institutions which are: provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and each transaction of which (a) is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and (b) is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 per cent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 per cent).”⁸⁸

Short-term Migrant

“A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least 3 months but less than a year (12 months). Except in cases where the move is for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage.”⁸⁹

Skill

“The ability to carry out the tasks and duties of a given job.”⁹⁰

84. UNDESA, Toolkit of International Migration, 2012.

85. UNTC, Article 2(1), International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990.

86. UNDESA, Toolkit of International Migration, 2012.

87. ILO, International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), 2008.

88. OECD, ‘Official development assistance, definition and coverage’, n.d.b.

89. UNDESA, Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration: Revision 1, 1998.

90. ILO, International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), 2008.

Skill level

“A function of the complexity and range of tasks and duties to be performed in an occupation. Skill level is measured operationally by considering one or more of: (1) the nature of the work performed in an occupation in relation to the characteristic tasks and duties defined for each ISCO-08 skill level; (2) the level of formal education defined in terms of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-97) (UNESCO, 1997) required for competent performance of the tasks involved; and (3) the amount of informal on-the-job training and/or previous experience in a related occupation required for competent performance of these tasks and duties.”⁹¹

Smuggling of Migrants

“[...] the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident. “Illegal entry” shall mean crossing borders without complying with the necessary requirements for legal entry into the receiving State; “Fraudulent travel or identity document” shall mean any travel or identity document: (1) That has been falsely made or altered in some material way by anyone other than a person or agency lawfully authorized to make or issue the travel or identity document on behalf of a State; or (2) That has been improperly issued or obtained through misrepresentation, corruption or duress or in any other unlawful manner; or (3) That is being used by a person other than the rightful holder.”⁹²

Status in employment

Describes the type of risk and authority which workers have in their jobs, as reflected in their explicit or implicit contract of employment.⁹³

Refugee

“[...] owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”⁹⁴

Remittances

“Household income from foreign economies arising mainly from the temporary or permanent movement of people to those economies. Remittances include cash and noncash items that flow through formal channels, such as via electronic wire, or through informal channels, such as money or goods carried across borders. They largely consist of funds and noncash items sent or given by individuals who have migrated to a new economy and become residents there, and

91. Ibid.

92. UNODC, Article 3 (a) (b) and (c), Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000.

93. ILO, Revision of the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93), 1993.

94. UNHR, Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 1, 1951.

the net compensation of border, seasonal, or other short-term workers who are employed in an economy in which they are not residents.”⁹⁵

Trafficking in Persons

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.⁹⁶

95. IMF, *International Transactions in Remittances: Guide for Compilers and Users*, 2009.

96. OHCHR, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, Article 3 (a), 2000.

Appendix II: Availability of data in ILMS South Asia tables (as of July 2018)

Key	
•	Complete
O	Incomplete
X	Not collected and/or not yet available to the ILO
	Not applicable

Table 1

Stock of South Asian nationals abroad by sex and country of destination (1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2017)

Country	Total	Sex	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
Afghanistan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bangladesh	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bhutan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
India	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Maldives	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Nepal	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pakistan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sri Lanka	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Note: Data derived from UNDESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision. Datasets for the 2017 Revision available at <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml> (UNDESA, 2017a).

Table 2

Permanent immigrant inflows of South Asian nationals to OECD countries (2000 - 2016)

Country	Total	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
AFG	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
BGD	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
BTN	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
IND	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
MDV	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
NPL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
PAK	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
LKA	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Note: As of July 2018, OECD has only released data on permanent immigrant inflows through 2016.

Table 3**Outflows of nationals for employment abroad by sex and country of destination (1997 – 2017)**

CTY	TOT	SEX	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
AFG																							
BGD	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
BTN																							
IND	•	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
MDV																							
NPL	•	•	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
PAK	•	X	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
LKA	•	•	O	O	O	O	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O	O

Note 1: Data on females departing for employment abroad from India are available, but only encompass those females originating from the 25 top districts of origin, and exclude nurses. Due to the lack of complete coverage, they have not been included in the South Asian ILMS.

Note 2: Data for 2016 and 2017 in Sri Lanka are provisional and thus marked incomplete. The ILO has not been able to obtain disaggregated country of destination data for 1997 – 2000, and these years are marked incomplete as a result.

Table 4**Outflows of nationals for employment abroad by skill level (1997 – 2017)**

CTY	TOT	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
AFG																						
BGD	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
BTN																						
IND	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MDV																						
NPL	•	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	•
PAK	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
LKA	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O	O

Note: Data for 2016 and 2017 in Sri Lanka are provisional and are thus marked incomplete.

Table 5**Outflow of nationals for employment abroad by occupation (1997 – 2017)**

Country	Available	Period of availability
Afghanistan	X	-
Bangladesh	X	-
Bhutan	X	-
India	X	-
Maldives	X	-
Nepal	•	2017
Pakistan	•	1971-2017
Sri Lanka	•	1997-2016

Note: Due to the large variability in occupational classifications and the extensive number of entries particularly in datasets produced in Sri Lanka and Nepal, it is not yet possible to input occupational data into the South Asian ILMS (due to formatting and design constraints). The ILO has not yet obtained occupational data based on ISCO-08 major categories from Sri Lanka, although these will be made available at a later date. The above table is meant to illustrate which countries in the subregion collect said data and what reference years are currently available.

Table 6**Outflows of nationals for employment abroad by method of recruitment (1997 – 2017)**

CTY	TOT	SEX	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
AFG																							
BGD	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
BTN																							
IND	•	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
MDV																							
NPL	•	•	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	•	•	•	•	•	•
PAK	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
LKA	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O	O	O

Note 1: Data for 2016 and 2017 in Sri Lanka are provisional and are thus marked incomplete.

Note 2: Data for India are not available disaggregated by sex, as such they are marked incomplete.

Table 7**Outflows of nationals for employment abroad by province/state of origin (1997 – 2017)**

CTY	TOT	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
AFG																						
BGD	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
BTN																						
IND	•	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
MDV																						
NPL	•	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
PAK	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
LKA	O	X	X	X	X		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O	O

Note 1: Data for 2016 and 2017 in Sri Lanka are provisional and are thus marked incomplete.

Note 2: Data for 2005 for this table in Sri Lanka are provisional and are thus marked incomplete.

Table 8**Inflows of external financial flows (remittances, net ODA and official aid, Foreign Direct Investment (1997 – 2017)**

CTY	TOT	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
AFG	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O
BGD	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O
BTN	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O
IND	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O
MDV	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O
NPL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O
PAK	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O
LKA	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	O

Note 1: Data derived from the World Bank

Note 2: Net ODA and official aid inflows data are yet not available for 2017, and migrant remittance inflows for 2017 were still provisional at the time this report was written. As such, this reference year is marked incomplete.

Table 9

Remittance transaction costs for US\$200 and US\$500 transfers from select destination countries to South Asian origin countries (Q3 2013 – Q2 2018)

CTY	Q3 13	Q4 13	Q1 14	Q2 14	Q3 14	Q4 14	Q1 15	Q2 15	Q3 15	Q4 15	Q1 16	Q2 16	Q3 16	Q4 16	Q1 17	Q2 17	Q3 17	Q4 17	Q1 18	Q2 18
AFG	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
BGD	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
BTN	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
IND	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
MDV																				
NPL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
PAK	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
LKA	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Table 10

Fatalities of migrant workers employed abroad (1997 – 2017)

CTY	TOT	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
AFG																						
BGD	X	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
BTN																						
IND	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MDV																						
NPL	•	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
PAK	•	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
LKA	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Note 1: The ILO is still working on compiling all available data on migrant worker fatalities.

Table 11**Total welfare fund payments paid out for deceased nationals employed abroad (1997 – 2017)**

CTY	TOT	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
AFG																						
BGD	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
BTN																						
IND	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MDV																						
NPL	o	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	•	X	•	•	•
PAK	•	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
LKA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	•	•	•	•

Note 1: The ILO is still working on compiling data from other countries on total welfare fund payments

Appendix III: FDI Net Inflows and net ODA and official aid received, South Asia (1997 – 2017)

India				Bangladesh			
Year	Net ODA and official aid received (current US\$)	FDI , net inflows (BoP, current US\$)	FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)	Year	Net ODA and official aid received (current US\$)	FDI , net inflows (BoP, current US\$)	FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)
1997	1646370000	3577330042	0.871838	1997	1012360000	139376153	0.288897
1998	1610320000	2634651658	0.633740	1998	1162860000	190059373	0.380236
1999	1490760000	2168591054	0.479035	1999	1219490000	179662970	0.350421
2000	1383420000	3584217307	0.775558	2000	1174330000	280384630	0.525362
2001	1729610000	5128093562	1.070660	2001	1045000000	78527040	0.145444
2002	1763710000	5208967106	1.025248	2002	900550000	52304931	0.095579
2003	720900000	3681984671	0.614081	2003	1397870000	268285232	0.445961
2004	778310000	5429250990	0.775952	2004	1416830000	448905401	0.689472
2005	1875960000	7269407226	0.898677	2005	1320430000	760504266	1.095150
2006	1383580000	20029119267	2.176329	2006	1222890000	456523168	0.635657
2007	1329210000	25227740887	2.100366	2007	1512900000	651029738	0.817754
2008	2016530000	43406277076	3.656951	2008	2070900000	1328422987	1.449748
2009	2481020000	35581372930	2.687536	2009	1237380000	901286583	0.879495
2010	2831340000	27396885034	1.653785	2010	1404600000	1232258247	1.068935
2011	3270220000	36498654598	2.002066	2011	1494680000	1264725163	0.983167
2012	1681850000	23995685014	1.312934	2012	2154050000	1584403460	1.188103
2013	2456340000	28153031270	1.516276	2013	2633590000	2602962095	1.735419
2014	2991820000	34576643694	1.695659	2014	2422640000	2539190940	1.468713
2015	3174350000	44009492130	2.093307	2015	2570130000	2831152765	1.451288
2016	2678680000	44458571546	1.954885	2016	2503590000	2326967495	1.050952
2017	...	39978394935	1.539116	2017	...	2151370680	0.861500

Source (Column 1): The World Bank, *Net ODA received (current US\$)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.CD>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Source (Column 2): Suggested source, World Bank, *FDI, net inflows (BoP, current US\$)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.CD.WD>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Source (Column 3): The World Bank, *FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.WD.GD.ZS>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Sri Lanka				Pakistan			
Year	Net ODA and official aid received (current US\$)	FDI , net inflows (BoP, current US\$)	FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)	Year	Net ODA and official aid received (current US\$)	FDI, net inflows (BoP, current US\$)	FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)
1997	332810000	430056152	2.849580	1997	902090000	716253125	1.147229
1998	427360000	193424023	1.227252	1998	1060410000	506000000	0.813610
1999	264690000	176410171	1.122778	1999	747670000	532000000	0.844795
2000	278430000	172941410	1.042074	2000	706570000	308000000	0.416484
2001	336290000	171790000	1.090747	2001	1946770000	378000000	0.522751
2002	338340000	196500000	1.188278	2002	2109220000	826000000	1.142354
2003	675600000	228720000	1.211327	2003	1072780000	534000000	0.641482
2004	510050000	232800000	1.126677	2004	1434140000	1118000000	1.141075
2005	1164900000	272400000	1.116129	2005	1616730000	2201000000	2.010007
2006	788090000	479700000	1.697007	2006	2178770000	4273000000	3.112978
2007	609760000	603000000	1.863919	2007	2294210000	5590000000	3.668323
2008	721840000	752200000	1.847465	2008	1500110000	5438000000	3.197360
2009	704200000	404000000	0.960350	2009	2762390000	2338000000	1.390402
2010	579620000	477559000	0.841840	2010	3020700000	2022000000	1.139753
2011	613460000	955920000	1.464116	2011	3498040000	1326000000	0.620823
2012	490890000	941116591	1.375173	2012	2017410000	859000000	0.382827
2013	403170000	932551318	1.255214	2013	2194470000	1333000000	0.576511
2014	491630000	893628980	1.126054	2014	3615820000	1868000000	0.764443
2015	427230000	679655644	0.843718	2015	3747530000	1621000000	0.599136
2016	365120000	897049376	1.096793	2016	2952860000	2488000000	0.892862
2017	...	1374894657	1.577172	2017	...	2815000000	0.923097

Source (Column 1): The World Bank, *Net ODA received (current US\$)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.CD>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Source (Column 2): Suggested source, World Bank, *FDI, net inflows (BoP, current US\$)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.CD.WD>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Source (Column 3): The World Bank, *FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.WD.GD.ZS>. Accessed 12 July 2018

Afghanistan				Maldives			
Year	Net ODA and official aid received (current US\$)	FDI , net inflows (BoP, current US\$)	FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)	Year	Net ODA and official aid received (current US\$)	FDI , net inflows (BoP, current US\$)	FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)
1997	230750000	(1460000)	...	1997	26280000	11408883	2.244855
1998	164200000	(10000)	...	1998	25050000	11517967	2.132576
1999	142860000	6040000	...	1999	30730000	12322250	2.091212
2000	136010000	170000	...	2000	19150000	22312448	3.573782
2001	410360000	680000	0.027624	2001	24770000	20541053	2.360553
2002	1309770000	50000000	1.211000	2002	27460000	24718600	2.755601
2003	1593670000	57800000	1.261005	2003	21340000	31774436	3.020036
2004	2310640000	186900000	3.536112	2004	28050000	52933702	4.314674
2005	2837950000	271000000	4.318674	2005	76570000	52991121	4.554997
2006	2962000000	238000000	3.372252	2006	38270000	63826813	4.051981
2007	5076880000	188690000	1.916833	2007	38090000	132432081	7.088057
2008	4874840000	40353040	0.395986	2008	54540000	181255432	7.979034
2009	6234870000	56107247	0.449327	2009	33250000	157963587	6.735340
2010	6470360000	190774432	1.197069	2010	111660000	216468946	8.363764
2011	6865790000	52173421	0.290980	2011	54290000	423530664	15.265932
2012	6666770000	56823660	0.276695	2012	56730000	227976867	7.898939
2013	5152540000	48311346	0.238407	2013	21700000	360816336	10.950382
2014	4942970000	42975263	0.208455	2014	22540000	333375218	9.016595
2015	4237290000	169146608	0.880258	2015	26830000	297975993	7.437256
2016	4064330000	93589443	0.480710	2016	26930000	456639057	10.813739
2017	...	53390000	0.256494	2017	...	517487324	11.256862

Source (Column 1): The World Bank, *Net ODA received (current US\$)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.CD>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Source (Column 2): Suggested source, World Bank, *FDI, net inflows (BoP, current US\$)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.CD.WD>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Source (Column 3): The World Bank, *FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.WD.GD.ZS>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Nepal				Bhutan			
Year	Net ODA and official aid received (current US\$)	FDI , net inflows (BoP, current US\$)	FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)	Year	Net ODA and official aid received (current US\$)	FDI , net inflows (BoP, current US\$)	FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)
1997	401870000	23056468	0.468752	1997	66020000	(700000)	(0.191275)
1998	400860000	12024660	0.247612	1998	56220000
1999	348500000	4350000	0.086419	1999	67160000	1050275	0.250641
2000	386420000	(484827)	(0.008824)	2000	53390000
2001	388990000	20850000	0.347092	2001	60780000
2002	342910000	(5952541)	(0.098375)	2002	73400000	2425412	0.451617
2003	464480000	14778086	0.233444	2003	76900000	3370307	0.541827
2004	425940000	(417346)	(0.005738)	2004	78260000	8859908	1.260870
2005	423130000	2451785	0.030156	2005	90100000	6210884	0.758471
2006	527670000	(6647984)	(0.073509)	2006	95720000	6122702	0.682019
2007	616820000	5741706	0.055606	2007	103050000	73855770	6.174758
2008	697020000	995124	0.007932	2008	85080000	3144001	0.249855
2009	853750000	38271270	0.297715	2009	127300000	18299707	1.446894
2010	814410000	87741712	0.548295	2010	131380000	75274009	4.747733
2011	886630000	94022157	0.497115	2011	141220000	31141615	1.710883
2012	769680000	91996607	0.488006	2012	161650000	24380674	1.336885
2013	873330000	74244987	0.385265	2013	136800000	20433631	1.136254
2014	883820000	30403267	0.151994	2014	130640000	28951713	1.488686
2015	1224780000	51895700	0.242380	2015	97280000	10768411	0.522927
2016	1065920000	105996376	0.501592	2016	51470000	8075838	0.364987
2017	...	196265099	0.801998	2017	...	(10991205)	(0.437574)

Source (Column 1): The World Bank, *Net ODA received (current US\$)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.CD>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Source (Column 2): Suggested source, World Bank, *FDI, net inflows (BoP, current US\$)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.CD.WD>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Source (Column 3): The World Bank, *FDI, net inflows (% of GDP)*, available from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.WD.GD.ZS>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Appendix IV: Summary document, ILO Technical Meeting

ILO Technical Meeting on International Labour Migration Statistics in South Asia, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2017



Overview of the Meeting

Specialists from Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Maldives, as well as representatives from the SAARC Secretariat, Colombo Process Technical Support Unit, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Sri Lankan Institute of Policy Studies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), convened in a technical meeting hosted by ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia. The ILO delivered presentations on (1) efforts related to strengthening South Asian labour migration statistics within the relevant national, regional and global migration frameworks; (2) measurement approaches that have been adopted at the international level, and the suitability of said definitions and methodologies at the South Asian level; (3) the SDGs and the indicator framework in relation to migration; and (4) the concept and framework for the proposed **International Labour Migration Statistics (ILMS) Database for South Asia**.

Participants were then asked to gather into country-based groups to discuss suggestions for changes and additional considerations to be made in the proposed ILMS, as well as suggestions for more effective use of data to inform labour migration policies in the subregion, and suggestions on improving coordination between producers of labour migration statistics in South Asia. Below are the key recommendations/action points emerging from the Technical Meeting:

Recommendations and Key Outcomes

1. Within each country, focal points should be identified in each department collecting migration data. Until a focal point is formally appointed, the ILO will communicate with the participants at the technical meeting through a mailing list to share information and keep the various actors informed.⁹⁷ The group may later be formalized into a country-

97. The mailing list will also include the representatives from South Asia that participated in the series of meetings in Korea on migration statistics – KOSTAT-ILO Joint Work Project on ILMS, <http://www.ilokostat-ilms.net/>.

level coordination committee focused on the collection and reporting of data. Said coordinating committees would also provide a medium through which various agencies can share information, data, and best practices at a country-level.

2. The ILMS database will continue to be populated with data according to the timeline proposed,⁹⁸ beginning with Phase 2 of data collection in December 2017. The ILO will work closely with focal points to provide and update data, and will review data submitted in January 2018.
3. Due to the current gaps in data availability and/or reliability, the questionnaire for the first round of the proposed ILMS database will be adjusted.⁹⁹ Priorities for future rounds of data collection include data tables on wages, recruitment costs, and repeat vs. first-time migration.
4. The proposal for SAARC endorsement of the ILMS database that has been submitted to the SAARC Secretariat will be updated to reflect the discussion at the technical meeting (e.g. list of tables proposed for collection). A selection of tables, graphs and infographics may also be provided to demonstrate the value of investing in migration statistics at national and regional levels.
5. Beyond the proposed regional database (that deals primarily with outflows from South Asia), linkages will also be made with ILOSTAT's global database. This may help incorporate the unique situation and interests of SAARC Member States such as Maldives, where the statistical priority is on labour migration inflows.
6. Countries will collaborate with ILO to work towards alignment with international statistical standards (ICLS Resolutions or Recommendations) on data collection in the area of labour migration statistics. This includes the development of brief guidance notes on migration modules (including return migration) in labour force surveys and household surveys – including case studies from countries where these questions have already been tested.
7. In addition to SAARC, this regional effort to improve labour migration statistics will be made available to the broader set of countries participating in the Colombo Process (perhaps linking to the online repository) and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue.
8. ILO and governments from the subregion will explore collaboration with particular countries of destination to improve data sharing, including on changes in visa status and irregular migration; on occupational accidents (SDG 8.8.1); etc.
9. ILO will collect and share examples of how government agencies, social partners, research institutions and civil society have effectively informed policy using labour migration data – through high level meetings, advocacy, media, etc.

98. **Timeline:** November 2017: Phase 1 Data Collection – desk-based data collection and meetings with ILO focal points to collect additional available data. December 2017: Phase 2 Data Collection – send ILMS Questionnaire to statistics agencies in South Asian countries to fill data gaps and cover any discrepancies in definitions and methodologies. January 2018: Review of Phase 2 Data Collection. February 2018 – Possible third round of data collection. February – April 2018 – Liaise with ILOSTAT and relevant partners in Geneva to provide data in an adequate format to be uploaded. Mid-2018: Upload the South Asian ILMS as a special collection hosted on the ILO Statistics Database

99. The originally proposed Table #8 on return migration will be moved to future rounds.

10. Countries will share updates on how they are progressing in reporting on the most relevant SDG indicators, including 8.8.1 (occupational accidents), 10.7.1 (recruitment costs), 10.c.1 (remittance costs), etc.
11. A tripartite regional meeting will be organized in the next biennium with technical focal points and policy-makers, as well as representatives from social partners. The objective will be to institutionalize the processes for the collection, sharing and alignment of migration data; present a more complete set of data tables for clearance; and share other developments, including on SDG monitoring within the subregion.

Appendix V: Sample questions related to migration in South Asian Labour Force Surveys

Sources: Afghanistan – Central Statistics Organization, *Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey 2013 – 2014* (CSO, 2016); Bangladesh – Ministry of Planning Statistics and Informatics Division, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *Quarterly Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2015-16* (BBS, 2017); Bhutan – Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, *Labour Force Survey Report 2015* (MLHR, 2015); Nepal – Central Bureau of Statistics, *Nepal Labour Force Survey 2017/18 Questionnaire* (CBS, 2017).

Afghanistan

12.1	12.2	12.10
Line no.	In which province of Afghanistan or in which country was <name> born?	What was the main reason <name> left <place of 12.2> to live somewhere else?
	Write the name of the province or country of birth	Codes at bottom of page
01		

Bangladesh

Section 14: Migration

Applicable for all members of the household

Line Number	101 Where did your mother live when you were born?	102 Name of the country	103 Was it a rural or urban area?	104 Where did you live before coming to this Upazila/Thana?	105 Name of the country	106 Was it a rural or urban area?	107 From what year have you been permanently dwelling in this Upazila / Thana?	108 What was the main reason for coming to this Upazila / Thana?
	This Upazila / 1 Different Upazila / 2 Thana of this 3 Different Zilla 4 Different Coun 4	102a Name	102b Code Rural Urban	Always lived in this Upazila/Thana since birth 1 If age < 15 ▶ End Living in a different Upazila / Thana of this 2 Different Zilla 3 Different Country 4	105a Name	105b Code Rural Urban	Example: 1945, 1987, 2014, etc. 1 2	looking for work 1 Posting related 2 Family reason 3 Education / training 4 Marriage 5 Natural disaster 6 Political reason 7 Conflict 8 Other reason 9 if age < 5 ▶ End if age >= 5 ▶ 109
01								
02								

Bhutan

Nationality 1- B 2- NB	What was the reason for movement? (Enter code)	Previous dzongkhag of residence before moving here (Enter code)	Did you move to current location during the last 1 year? 1-Yes 2- No (go to Col.14)	Place of birth (Enter Dzongkhag code)
7	13	12	11	10

Nepal

To be asked to members of age 14 Years and above								
Where was (Name) born? (If Foreign Country..... B12)		Was the birth place of (Name) then an urban or rural area? Urban.....1 Rural.....2	What is the main reason for (Name) to leave birth place? Marriage.....1 Other family reason.....2 Better salary/wage.....3 Start new job/business....4 Transfer by employer....5 Study/Training.....6 Looking for work.....7 Easier lifestyle.....8 Natural disaster.....9 Conflict.....10 Others (specify).....11	Was (Name's) last usual place of residence in the same VDC/ Municipality? Yes.....1.. B18 No.....2	What was (Name's) last usual place of residence before this one? (If Foreign Country.... B16)	Was it then an urban or rural area? Urban.....1 Rural.....2	How many years ago did (Name) move to this place? (Write in complete number of years: if less than 1 year, write '0' and if 15 years or more, write '15')	What is the main reason for (Name) to migrate here? Marriage.....1 Other family reason.....2 Better salary/wage.....3 Start new job/business....4 Transfer by employer....5 Study/Training.....6 Looking for work.....7 Easier lifestyle.....8 Natural disaster.....9 Conflict.....10 Others (specify).....11
District/ Country	Code				District/Country	Code		
R10		R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17

Appendix VI: Sample questions related to migration in South Asian population censuses

Sources: Bangladesh – Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Sample Census 2011, 2011; Bhutan – Royal Government of Bhutan, *Population and Housing Census of Bhutan*, 2005; India - ; Maldives – Ministry of Planning and National Development, *Population and Housing Census 2006 Shaviyani Form*, 2006; Nepal – Central Bureau of Statistics, *National Population Census*, 2011; Pakistan – Population Census Organization, *Fifth Housing and Population Census*, 1997; Sri Lanka – Department of Census and Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing 2011, 2012*;

Bangladesh

Module 8: Members returned from abroad						Module 9: International Migration						
Line Number	For HH members who returned from abroad in the past 5 years				Serial No.	For person 5 years and above who were the members of this household but migrated for 6 or more months						
	64. Country where he/she returned from		65. Date when he/she returned from abroad			66. Main reason for return	67. Name of migrant	68. Sex	69. Age	70. Degree	71. Duration	72. Reason for leaving
	Name	Code	Month	Year		(Nickname)	1-Male 2-Female	(Year)	(Education code)	(Year)	1-Work 2-Study 3-Dependency 4-Other	(Country Code)
						1						
						2						
						3						
						4						

Bhutan

MEMBERS ABSENT			DURATION ABSENT
Within Bhutan	Outside Bhutan	CODE	Write the duration absent in completed numbers of months
Mention Dzongkhag, Gewog/Town	Mention Country	For Office use	
(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)

PLACE OF BIRTH		DURATION OF STAY	PREVIOUS RESIDENCE		REASON FOR MIGRATION
Write the name of Dzongkhag, gewog/town if born within Bhutan and name of country if born outside Bhutan.	CODE <i>For office use</i>	Duration of stay in the current gewog/town? Write in completed years; if less than one year write "00"	Write the name of Dzongkhag, gewog/town if born within Bhutan and name of country if born outside Bhutan.	CODE <i>For office use</i>	Reason for change of residence (Enter Code from list below)
(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)

India

Migration characteristics				
Fill for person born outside this village/town Birth place if within India , write the present name of the village/town, district and state. Also write '1' for village or '2' for town in the box. if outside India , write the present name of the country and put '1' against village/town and district.		Fill for person who has come to this village/town from elsewhere Place of last residence 24(a) if within India , write the present name of the village/town, district and state. Also write '1' for village or '2' for town in the box. if outside India , write the present name of the country and put '1' against village/town and district.		
		24(b) at the time of migration Rural, 1 Urban, 2	Reason for migration Work/Employment 1 Business 2 Education 3 Marriage 4 Moved after birth 5 Moved with household 6 Any other 7	Duration of stay in this village/town since migration in completed years (write '00' if less than a year)
Village/Town	Village/Town			
District	District			
State/Country	State/Country			

Maldives

Migration	For all ages			
M6- Are you in the Maldives now?				
1 In the Maldives	1	1	1	1
2 Another country	2	2	2	2
M7- What is your place of birth?				
1 This island	1	1	1	1
2 Another country	2	2	2	2
3 Another island (specify atoll and island)	3	3	3	3

Administrative purpose

Nepal

Where is the birth place of (Name) ? (Code must be encircled, if the place of birth is other dist. or other country the name must be specified)	Only for code 2 and 3 in Question 16		For persons 5 years and above
	How long (Name) has been staying here ? (Write down completed year; enter "00" if less than 1 year)	What is the main reason of staying in this district of (Name) ?	Where was (Name) lived 5 yrs ago ?
16	17	18	19
1. Same Dist. → 19 2. Other District 1. V.D.C. 2. Municipality 3. Other country Year	1. Agriculture 2. Business 3. Service 4. Study 5. Marriage 6. Dependent 7. Conflict 8. Others	1. Same District 2. Other District 1. V.D.C. 2. Municipality 3. Other country

Pakistan

All Persons		
	Migration	District of last residence
Write name of relevant district in case of birth in Pakistan. If born outside Pakistan, name the country	Period of continuous residence here : 1. Less than 1 year 2. 1 year to less than 5 3. 5 year to less than 10 4. 10 year and above 5. Since birth (Skip to col. 17)	Write name of district of last residence in Pakistan, if last residence outside Pakistan name the country
9	10	11

Sri Lanka

P9 Citizenship

If Sri Lankan mark '77'. If not known mark '88'. If a citizen of another country write the name of the country and its code.

Sri Lankan ☐ 77 Not known ☐ 88

Other country (specify)

P10 District of birth

If the mother was usually residing in this district at child birth, mark '77'. If mother resided in another district, write the name of the district and its code. If born in another country, write the name of the country and its code.

This district ☐ 77

District / Country

Appendix VII: Measuring migration in population and housing censuses

(i) Overview

Although valuable statistics on international migration – including emigration from and return migration to countries of origin – can be derived from population and housing censuses and other population surveys, survey questionnaires are often not designed adequately and do not include the necessary questions in order to produce meaningful statistics on international migrant stocks (as well as flows).

Per the United Nations' *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (Rev 3)*, census recommendations tend to focus on two subgroups of the population when studying international migrants: the foreign-born population and the foreign citizens living in the country of enumeration (UNDESA, 2015f). To identify these groups, the census must collect information on country of birth, and country of citizenship. It is also important to record the year of arrival in the country of enumeration to establish a migrant's length of stay (UNDESA, 2015f).

Furthermore, as the phenomenon of international return migration becomes increasingly common, and given the interest of South Asian countries in return migrants, questions on "year and month of arrival could also be asked of native-born respondents who have ever lived in another country" (UNDESA, 2015f). Further questions may also be asked on the specific country of residence where a return migrant was previously residing.

In response to numerous calls for improved statistics on international migration, the United Nations released a comprehensive *Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses* in 2017. The present section includes a number of the sample questions from the aforementioned handbook related to the collection of statistics on (1) stock of foreign-born persons, (2) stock of foreigners, (3) stock of returned migrants and (3) stock of "second generation migrants".¹⁰⁰ These are not an exhaustive list of all of the different stocks of international migrants that can be tracked and monitored in censuses, but are the primary focuses of the handbook.

Additionally, there is a high degree of variation in the sample questions presented in the handbook. Many of these variations in questions related to international migration in population and housing censuses have to do with different country-level and regional policy and data collection priorities. The sample questions included in this section are only a few examples of those illustrated in UNDESA's 2017 Handbook. For a complete discussion on caveats, methodologies, definitions, limitations and best practices, readers are advised to reference the full document.

It is worth mentioning that while the handbook and this present section focus on specific migration modules in population and housing census questionnaires, many of these questions could be included in other population surveys – including Labour Force Surveys – to collect additional information on international migrants and nationals residing abroad.

100. For a complete list of tabulations that can be derived from these aforementioned questions, reference the complete handbook, available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/documents/BG-4a-Migration-Handbook-E.pdf>.

The table below outlines a few primary migrant population stocks, and the topics required to identify and characterize these stocks.

Table: Topics that provide the data for policy-relevant population stocks

Population Stock	Topics required to identify the stock	Topics useful for characterizing the stock
Foreign-born persons	Country of birth	Date or period of arrival Reason for migration
Foreigners	Country of citizenship	Date or period of arrival Citizenship acquisition
Returned migrants	Ever lived abroad for at least 12 months Country of citizenship or Country of birth	Date of last arrival Country of previous residence Reason for return
Second generation migrants	Country of birth Country of birth of father Country of birth of mother	

Note: “Bold type indicates that the topic is designated as a “core topic” in the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses Rev 3* (UNDESA, 2015c). Other topics shown may or may not be in the list of population topics in the *Principles and Recommendations*” (UNDESA, 2017c).

Source: Recreated from the *Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses*, UNDESA 2017c.

(ii) Foreign-born persons

The stock of foreign-born persons “refers to the stock of the population born abroad” living within the country of enumeration (UNDESA, 2017c). The question that should be used to identify foreign-born persons is the respondent’s place of birth, and it is usually recommended that this question be asked of all respondents in order to distinguish between foreign-born and native-born persons (UNDESA, 2017c). Although questions in censuses on this topic may vary slightly, below are two examples of good practice:

Example A

D6. Where did’s mother reside when she gave birth to him/her?

Municipality/Community: _____

District: _____

Don’t know municipality/community ... [19]

Abroad (specify country): _____

Don’t know country ... [29]

Example B

I-5. What is your place of birth?

1. In (this country) - District code _____

Town/village _____

2. Abroad -

1 - Italy

2 - Greece

3 - USA

4 - Canada

5 - Turkey

6 - Other (specify): _____

Source: *Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses*, UNDESA 2017c.

Finally, below are examples of questions on the year of arrival. Said questions can also be highly varied and either track “the date of first arrival in the country or the date of the most recent arrival in the country” (UNDESA, 2017c), which both provide slightly different information on the international migrant population:

- a) "In what year did you/ did _____ come to live in (this country)?"
- b) "In which year did the person first arrive in (this country) to live here for one year or more?"
- c) "In which year did (name) move to this country?"

Source: Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses, UNDESA 2017c.

(iii) Stocks of foreigners

The stock of foreigners refers to the "stock of the population who do not have the citizenship of the country of enumeration" (UNDESA, 2017c). Country of citizenship differs from country of birth as it can change during an individual's lifetime, such as through naturalization or marriage. There is wide variety in the way in which questions on country of citizenship are asked, and in many cases the terminology can vary greatly. Some countries may use the term "nationality" in place of citizenship, although this is not recommended (UNDESA, 2017c).

Below are two examples of best practice for questions on country of citizenship outlined in the handbook. It is recommended that all persons enumerated provide an answer to this question.

Example A

P-09. Is (name) a (from this country, adjective) citizen?

1=Yes 2=No

Source: Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses, UNDESA 2017c.

Example B

4. Country of citizenship

- (This country)
- Other [If you have other state citizenship, write the name of the state] _____
- No state citizenship

Source: Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses, UNDESA 2017c.

It is worth noting that some census questionnaires use pre-coded lists with pre-inserted country or regional names as well as an "others" category, both for country of birth and country of citizenship; however, this practice is not always recommended as it "results in the loss of country detail that is not recoverable once data have been collected" (UNDESA, 2017c). Some questions also allow for respondents to include more than one citizenship (in the instance of dual or multiple citizenship) and also inquire as to the method of acquisition of citizenship – e.g. by birth or by naturalization.

(iv) Stocks of returned migrants

The stock of returned migrants “refers to citizens of the country of enumeration who emigrated and subsequently came back to live in the country” (UNDESA, 2017c). While the wording of questions on return migration can vary greatly, below are a few examples outlined in the document that show ways in which these particular individuals of an enumerated population can be accounted for. It might be very useful to also include questions on reasons why migrants return – such as family reunification, involuntary return or deportation, or due to retirement. This question should ideally be asked of all individuals over one year of age at the time that the census is conducted (UNDESA, 2017c).

Example A

A24. QUESTION TO BE ASKED ABOUT PERSONS BORN IN (THIS COUNTRY) Have you ever lived outside (this country) for 12 or more consecutive months?

Current borders of (this country) shall apply.

1. Yes 2 NO → Question A27

Note: Continuous residence outside (this country) shall not include:

- employment in a foreign country, if the respondent stays most of vacant days with own household living in (this country);
- studies in general education school (upper secondary school, gymnasium, basic school etc.) or secondary vocational school in a foreign country if parents' home was in (this country);
- compulsory military service in the foreign country and participation in a war.

Studies in an institution of higher education or higher vocational school in a foreign country are considered continuous residence outside (this country)

A25. When did you recently arrive to settle in (this country)? Indicate the year.

Current borders of (this country) shall apply.

Year: ____

Source: Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses, UNDESA 2017c.

Example B

D14. (a) Did ever have his/her permanent residence (for more than 12 months) abroad?

1 Yes 2 No → D15

(b) In which country?

Specify country: ____

(c) When did come to (this country) for permanent settlement?

Month ____ Year ____

Source: Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses, UNDESA 2017c.

(v) Stocks of foreign-born citizens

Although questions on place of birth of parents were not generally included in most censuses in the 2010 global census round, it could be used to collect responses on second-generation migrants. Below is an example question on how to collect information on the birth-place of each respondent's parents:

Example A.

Where was each of this person's parents born?
[Mark "x" or specify country according to present boundaries.]

(a) Father

Born in (this country) _____

Born outside (this country) _____

Specify country _____

(b) Mother

Born in (this country) _____

Born outside (this country) _____

Specify country _____

Source: Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses, UNDESA 2017c.

(vi) Measuring emigration

The stock of emigrants refers to "the number of persons who have emigrated out of the country and are currently living abroad, or the stock of persons who have spent at least one year of their lives in the reporting country and who are currently absent from the country for at least one year or intend to be absent for at least one year" (UNDESA, 2017c).

Measuring emigration may also be a priority of population and housing censuses, particularly in countries from which large numbers of international migrants originate. However, tracking emigration is particularly difficult, given that "information on the people involved cannot be obtained directly from them" (UNDESA, 2017c), as they are no longer residing in the country and cannot provide answers during census enumeration. As such, for emigrants to be accurately recorded in census enumeration, someone must be left behind in the origin country to report on household members abroad – even though this may not always be accurate. However, if the entire household has emigrated, no individual would be left in origin countries to report the emigration (UNDESA, 2017c).

Only 35 countries worldwide included a question on household members abroad in the 2010 census round, and only six of these asked respondents to specify the period of absence (e.g. 12 months or more) (UNDESA, 2017c). This represents a significant gap in survey design not only in South Asia, but around the world, and an important area where population and housing census survey schedules can be improved to collect more important information on nationals living abroad. This may be considered particularly important in South Asia, where millions of nationals are residing outside of their respective countries of origin.¹⁰¹

101. Gaps on information on emigrants from a country of origin can be filled by gathering information on immigrants gathered from population and housing surveys in countries of destination.

Below are a few examples of questions of best practice outlined in the UN *Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses* on nationals residing abroad. Again, the design of said questions may vary substantially between countries:

Example A

LIST 2. PERSONS THAT LIVE ABROAD

Is any previous member of this household living abroad for 12 months or more?
[Do not include children born abroad who have not lived in this household.]

1 ☐ Yes – (Fill in the table)

2 ☐ No – Go to LIST 3.

Source: Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses, UNDESA 2017c.

Example B

EMIGRATION OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY

[Answer for all former household members 15 years or older who have been living continuously for 6 months or more outside (country) (or intends to do so).]

E01. Has any former member of this household been living continuously for 6 months or more outside (country)?

Yes – Record the following information (for each person listed) ...

No – Go to P00.

Source: Handbook on Measuring International Migration through Population Censuses, UNDESA 2017c.



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