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UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC  
GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND  
UNITED NATIONS POPULATION DIVISION  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION

Asia-Pacific High-level Meeting on International Migration and Development

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### **Annotated Agenda for Roundtable Discussions**

#### a) Remittances for development

Remittances are increasingly becoming an important source of revenue in developing countries, as also signaled when the Monterrey consensus recognized remittances as a source of financing for development. In many countries, remittance flows are already exceeding ODA flows and have been more stable. In several Asia-Pacific countries, remittances have helped keep current account deficits under control, in spite of chronic trade deficits. The effect of remittances on poverty reduction and development has, however, yet to be fully explored. To embark on this discussion, the following possible issues could be addressed at the roundtable:

- What is the role of remittances for developing economies in Asia-Pacific? By being transferred directly to the household, can they contribute to economic growth?
- What are the determinants of remittances? What does this mean for the migration policies of countries of origin?
- In most countries, remittances are still transferred through unofficial channels. How can governments promote transfers through official channels?
- How can measures to encourage the transfer and investment of remittances be combined with macro-economic policies in countries of origin?

#### b) International migration in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

International migration has specific characteristics in each of the groups of countries with special needs, i.e. least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Whilst migration offers an alternative route to tackle limited economic opportunities and remittances have become an important source of income, the brain drain – the loss of human capital through emigration – also poses challenges for national development. With regard small countries, such as the Pacific island countries, migration tends to be traditionally high, due to their limited opportunities for economic

diversification. Many landlocked countries also experience another dimension to migration as, in addition to being countries of origin for migrants, they are also transit countries for international migration. To further explore this topic, the following possible issues could be discussed:

- What can governments do to ensure positive development impact of migration?
- How does international migration contribute to the achievement of MDGs in least developed countries?
- Does out-migration of skilled persons lead to impediment to development in the countries of origin? What kind of measure can be taken to facilitate the circulation or return of out-migrants?
- How are landlocked countries affected by transit of migrants?

#### c) Social dimensions of migration

International migration has a social face in both the countries of origin and destination. In the case of temporary migration- the most prevalent case of migration in Asia-Pacific- the families left behind could suffer negative impacts on family cohesion, marital stability and childcare. As migration becomes increasingly feminized in the region, there arise specific social implications of migration on female migrants in countries of origin which are expected to differ from those on male migrants. Many female migrants are engaged in feminized occupations (e.g. domestic work, health services, manufacturing) where they are often left without social protection and in extreme cases subject to abuse. The provision of social protection and basic health services to migrants is another area of concern to both sending and receiving countries. To address this challenge facing Governments to harness the benefits of migration and mitigate its social cost, the following possible issues could be discussed:

- What are the main social impacts of international migration in countries of origin as well as those of destination?
- What are the major impacts of migration on the families behind? Do the benefits outweigh the cost? What can be done to mitigate the cost?
- What are the different impacts of male and female migration? Does female migration contribute to their empowerment?
- What can be done to ensure that the rights of migrants be better protected?

#### d) Data and research on migration

Research on the socio-economic dimensions of international migration and its linkages to development is fundamental to plan and formulate appropriate policies and programmes. There is an urgent need to identify gaps in knowledge and enhance the understanding of the complex mechanisms of international migration. However, research on migration is often constrained by data quality, availability and comparability. Clearer definitions of migration, stronger data collection, increased research into migration and evaluation of current programmes and policies are required to better guide policy formulation and implementation. In order to better understand the direction and magnitude of the impacts of migration on the country of origin and destination, possible topics to be discussed at the roundtable could include:

- What are the standard sources of data on international migration?
- What are the critical data gaps in international migration? What can and cannot the existing data tell?
- How can we improve the data quality, availability and comparability?
- Where the critical research gaps exist in understanding the dynamics of international migration and its linkages with development?
- How can research on international migration be linked most effectively with policy-making?