

# Promoting Effective Governance of Labour Migration from South Asia

The ILO South Asia Labour Migration Governance Project 2013–2016





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Governance Project 2013–2016**





Migrant workers at a construction site  
in Qatar ©ILO/Apex Image

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Potential Nepali migrant workers waiting to receive their labour permit from the Government of Nepal ©ILO/ Omar Havana

# Labour migration from South Asia: Trends

**M**igrant workers account for more than 150 million of the world's approximately 232 million international migrants (persons residing outside their country of birth), according to a new study<sup>1</sup> by the International Labour Organization (ILO). More of them are men, at 83.7 million, with 66.6 million women migrant workers. The Arab States receive the largest proportion of migrant workers of all workers (at 35.6 per cent), but host only 11.7 per cent of all migrant workers worldwide. In contrast, the Asia-Pacific region receives 17.2 per cent of all migrant workers.

Latest government data place the total annual outflow from five countries in South Asia at 2.8 million migrant workers. India formally exports the largest number of workers (at 805,000 workers in the category requiring emigration clearance<sup>2</sup>), followed by Pakistan (at 752,000 workers), Nepal (at 500,000 workers<sup>3</sup>), Bangladesh (at 409,000 workers) and Sri Lanka (at 282,000 workers).<sup>4</sup>

South Asian migrant workers accept employment options all around the world, with the migration trends having become increasingly complex these days. Migrant

movements within South Asia are mainly to India (primarily from Nepal and Bangladesh) and to Pakistan (mainly Afghan refugees). Within Asia, there is a steadily increasing flow of South Asian workers to East and South-East Asia, with Malaysia the primary destination. Though smaller in number, workers are also choosing the Republic of Korea and entering under the Employment Permit System, which was introduced in 2006.

Still, the main flow of workers from South Asia is to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member States. The GCC region emerged as the primary destination for South Asian workers in the 1970s and has remained because of the demand connected with the massive oil boom-related development. Of all migrant workers from India (in the ECR category), Pakistan and Sri Lanka, 96 per cent, 96 per cent and 88 per cent, respectively, take jobs in a GCC country. About 75 per cent of all migrant workers from Bangladesh end up in a GCC country.<sup>5</sup> And 62 per cent of all migrants from Nepal work in a GCC country, while 36 per cent go to Malaysia.

The six GCC economies rely heavily on foreign labour—expatriates account for around 85 per cent of the GCC countries' total population. Foreign labour comprises 99 per cent of the

private sector labour force in Qatar, 93 per cent in Kuwait and 89 per cent in Saudi Arabia.<sup>6</sup> Future demand is likely to increase with the extensive infrastructure investments planned for the Qatar World Cup 2022, the United Arab Emirates World Expo 2020 and generally across Saudi Arabia.<sup>7</sup>

Although Asia accounted for a third of all migrants to countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2011, and half of them had a high-level of education (largely from China, India and the Philippines),<sup>8</sup> the majority of South Asian migrant workers are low- or semi-skilled. A large majority of South Asian migrants (including all who go to GCC countries) work with a fixed-term contract. The private sector manages most of the recruitment, with state agencies taking a minor role.

There is an increasing trend of female workers going abroad, although starting from a very low level and with variation among countries: Women accounted for 50 per cent of all migrants from Sri Lanka, but only 6 per cent of all migrants from Nepal and less than 1 per cent from Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> In the GCC countries, women are primarily employed in hospitality and service jobs, including domestic work, whereas men typically are employed in construction, manufacturing, agriculture (and herding), transport and security. ■



South Asian labourers work on a construction of a building ©ILO/ Apex Image



# Labour migration between South Asia and the GCC: Challenges

Despite the substantial benefits—remittances in origin countries and human capital in destination countries—the official channels for migration are failing to distribute the benefits equitably among employers, intermediaries and workers. Too many migrant workers pay high recruitment fees, receive low wages and are denied their fundamental rights to freedom of movement and freedom of association when abroad. Abuses during recruitment and employment are common.<sup>10</sup> Yet, sadly, the lack of decent work options at home makes the challenging conditions abroad a compelling choice. The specific challenges encompass the following.

## **Commercialization of the recruitment industry and exploitation during recruitment.**

Malpractice and abuse, including high fees, misrepresentation of jobs, failure to meet placement obligations and contract substitution, are typical across South Asia's recruitment industry, which is largely managed by the private sector. Often combined with low wages, the abuse leads to heavy debt burdens for workers. Low-skilled and poorly educated workers are often unable to distinguish the genuine from the unscrupulous of agents and intermediaries in the wide range of conduits confronting them. With a few exceptions, the current regulation of recruitment agencies tends to be ineffective.

## **Abuses during employment and access to justice:**

Several restrictive policies in the GCC countries impact the rights of migrant workers, including the *kafala*, or sponsorship, system.<sup>11</sup> The absence of freedom of association in many GCC countries further contributes to workers' vulnerability to abuse and exploitation. In 2012, the ILO estimated<sup>12</sup> that some 600,000 migrants were trapped in forced labour conditions in the Middle East. Domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to abuse because they work in the isolation of private homes. Employers' illegal confiscation of workers' identity and travel documents is common practice, as is the signing of second contracts with lower wages and modified work- and living conditions upon arrival in destination country.<sup>13</sup> Even where access to legal redress is provided under national law (with domestic work excluded across the region), there are few prosecutions and convictions in favour of migrant workers.

## **Labour mobility, skills and certification:**

Lack of information about qualifications, skills and wages and how demand will evolve in the short, medium and long terms inhibits informed decisions among workers as well as public and private institutions. This results in lost opportunities and training investment mistakes in both source and recipient countries. There is no system of mutual recognition of educational attainment and acquired skills, based on comparable standards

for low- and semi- skilled occupations, between the two regions. A system that recognizes and certifies workers' qualifications and skills, that periodically tests for and documents upgraded skills throughout the foreign employment and provides mutual recognition of those skills through an internationally recognized "skills passport" would bring tremendous benefits to countries, employers and workers. Additionally, some origin countries also suffer labour shortages in certain occupations as a direct result of migration.

**Migration and development:** Despite these challenges, labour migration generates substantial benefits both for countries of origin and destination. In addition to remittances, migration enables the upgrading of professional, cultural and social skills as well as technology transfer. International migration has become a vehicle for development and poverty reduction and is recognized in the Sustainable Development Goals (Goals 8 and 10 in particular) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. Yet, development frameworks are largely quiet on how to use these resources at the national, community and individual household levels. And the contribution of migrants in promoting development and poverty reduction in origin countries and towards the prosperity of destination countries needs to be recognized and reinforced. ■



Aspirant migrant worker attending  
a community level pre-decision  
orientation ©ILO/Omar Havana

# The ILO response: South Asia Labour Migration Governance Project

The South Asia Labour Migration Governance (SALM) Project promotes well-managed labour migration flows from India, Nepal and Pakistan to Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates through three approaches:

1. Providing reliable information on overseas employment opportunities and building up the system for matching qualified jobseekers with foreign employer demand.
2. Improving recruitment services and increasing the protection of migrant workers during employment to reduce migration costs and recruitment abuses in origin and destination countries.
3. Expanding training opportunities and providing a system to enable the portability of skills for outgoing and returning migrant workers.

Through governments, trade unions and NGOs, the project targets at least 15,000 migrants from India, Nepal and Pakistan with:

- improved access to reliable information on job opportunities and requirements in the GCC countries;
- pre-departure information;
- portability of skills;
- better recruitment services, including lower recruitment costs; and
- protection during employment, including links to local service providers. ■

## THE PROJECT AT A GLANCE

**Donor:** European Commission

**Budget:** €2,407,186 (of which the European Commission is contributing €1,925,749 and ILO €481,437)

**Duration:** 1 June 2013–30 September 2016

**Geographical focus:** Three countries of origin—India, Nepal and Pakistan—and three countries of destination in the GCC region—Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates

**Partners:** Ministry of Labour and Employment in Nepal; Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development in Pakistan; and Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and the India Centre for Migration in India. The project also works with workers' and employers' organizations, private recruitment agencies, NGOs, migrant associations, diaspora organizations, embassies, researchers and other actors in each country.



**KOSHI INTERNATIONAL SERVICES PVT. LTD.**  
S.No. 287713  
Refer Name: om  
Name: Umesh Lal  
Company: SPI  
Job Category: ...

**Government of Nepal  
Department of Foreign Employment**  
S.No: 287713  
R.A. License No: 0498 (KOSHI INTERNATIONAL)  
Employer Name: initial saudi arabia  
Country Name: Saudi Arabia  
Profession: General Labour  
Approval Date: 2072-04-19 (Salary 800)  
Validity of the Permit: 2 year(s)  
Authorized Signature: ...  
Sticker Number: 032817713

**Government of Nepal  
Department of Foreign Employment**  
S.No: 287713  
R.A. License No: 0498 (KOSHI INTERNATIONAL)  
Employer Name: initial saudi arabia  
Country Name: Saudi Arabia  
Profession: General Labour  
Approval Date: 2072-04-19 (Salary 800)  
Validity of the Permit: 2 year(s)  
Authorized Signature: ...  
Sticker Number: 032817711

**Government of Nepal  
Department of Foreign Employment**  
S.No: 287713  
R.A. License No: 0498 (KOSHI INTERNATIONAL)  
Employer Name: initial saudi arabia  
Country Name: Saudi Arabia  
Profession: General Labour  
Approval Date: 2072-04-19 (Salary 800)  
Validity of the Permit: 2 year(s)  
Authorized Signature: ...  
Sticker Number: 05262183

Final labour permits issued by the Government of Nepal with respective passports ©ILO/Omar Havana

# The SALM Project: Achievements as of December 2015

The SALM Project responds to the challenges of migration in the South Asia–GCC region corridors with activities in five critical areas, with the following achievements to date.

## 1. PROMOTION OF SAFE MIGRATION AND INFORMATION:

Access to accurate and relevant information prior to migration is absolutely necessary to ensure that workers make informed decisions throughout their migration journey.

- The project is helping to establish **migrant resource centres**. In **Pakistan**, the project is supporting the establishment and running of two migrant resource centres, one in Lahore and another one in Islamabad, in partnership with the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, the Punjab Department of Labour and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. These are the first-ever facilities in the country dedicated to providing information activities to migrant workers and are considered a major contribution to the protection of migrant workers in Pakistan.

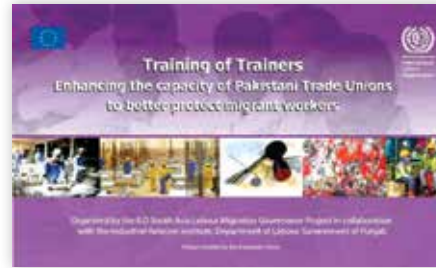
In **Nepal**, the project collaborated with the Foreign Employment Promotion Board and the Non-Resident Nepali Association to set up an information centre in the Labour Village of Kathmandu, which is a one-stop location catering to some 1,500 migrant workers every day. In the first two months after its official inauguration in early October 2015, the centre provided services—mostly in the form of information delivery and referral—to approximately 1,100 potential migrant workers.

- In **India**, the project is working with the Trade Union Coordinating Council in three districts of Andhra and Telangana states and the Centre for Indian Migration Studies in Kerala State. Through these partners, the project reaches out to a large number of potential and actual migrant workers with **information on safe migration and various support services**, including legal support.
- The project has developed country-specific information booklets called **Travel Smart–Work Smart**.<sup>14</sup> These are disseminated through the migrant resource centres and other outreach channels in all

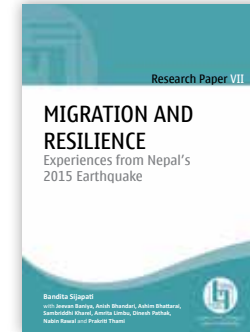


three countries. In **India**, the Ministry of Overseas Affairs are going to place them on their website and wants to replicate the booklets for additional destination countries. In **Nepal**, the booklets are also disseminated widely across Nepal through migrant resource centres and other service centres run by the HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, Nepal and World Education Nepal. The booklets target low- and semi-skilled workers with information on security during employment, working safely and profitably and how to avoid exploitation and abuse. The eight booklets have been printed in more than 60,000 copies in a range of local languages, including Nepali, Urdu, Hindi, Telugu and Malayalam and covering the following migration corridors:

- Nepal–Kuwait
  - Nepal–Qatar
  - Nepal–United Arab Emirates
  - India–Kuwait
  - India–Qatar
  - India–United Arab Emirates
  - Pakistan–Saudi Arabia
  - Pakistan–United Arab Emirates.
- In **Nepal** and in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and The Asia Foundation, the project is helping the Ministry of Labour and Employment develop an **annual migration statistical report**<sup>15</sup>. The first-ever such report was published in September 2014, and the second report will be out in early 2016. Following the great interest generated by this report, the project is partnering with the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development in **Pakistan** to publish a similar report that will be launched during the first quarter 2016.



- In **Pakistan**, the project developed a training of **trainers' manual for trade unionists**<sup>16</sup> to better protect the rights of migrant workers and conducted the first-ever training on this subject in March 2015. One of the outcomes was a joint trade union **plan of action** that has led to a number of follow-up activities.
- In **India**, the project worked with the Centre for Indian Migrant Studies (CIMS) to include a **short education video on pre-departure orientation** that provides contact numbers for emergency situations on a private television channel, Kairali, which runs a programme called *Pravasalokam* focussing on missing persons in the Gulf region.
- The frequent media reporting on the incidence of deaths of Nepali migrant workers in the countries of destination fuelled the need to understand the gaps in the protection of migrant workers' rights. In **Nepal**, the project **conducted an analysis of the available official data on the number of migrant workers**



**who died during employment abroad.**

The report, which will be launched in February 2016, presents an analysis of the causes of the some 4,300 deaths that occurred among migrant workers from FY 2008–09 to FY 2014–15 and comparatively analysing it with national mortality data to put the numbers in perspective. The analysis is intended to argue for improved mechanisms for reporting the deaths of workers abroad.

- Following the earthquake that shook **Nepal** in April 2015, the project funded a **rapid assessment**<sup>17</sup> of **166 households in three affected districts** that the Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility conducted two months after the disaster erupted. The study reported that the remittance transfer after the earthquake did not increase substantially, in contrast to what the general literature on migration and natural disasters have cited. Nor did many migrant workers return home to support the rescue and rehabilitation efforts.

- Upon the request from the Foreign Employment Promotion Board in **Nepal**, the project developed a two-day **community orientation manual to strengthen and facilitate an informed decision-making** process regarding labour migration. The manual aims to help individuals who are potentially interested in migration for foreign employment make their decision in an informative, unbiased and efficient manner. After it is finalized in first quarter 2016, the manual will be used by district-level trainers, such as social mobilizers and/or community workers under coordination of the Foreign Employment Promotion Board.

- A delegation from **Pakistan** comprising two officials from the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and one from the Punjab Labour and Human Resource Department **visited Sri Lanka** in December 2015 to study their labour migration governance system, mainly in the areas of pre-departure training, ethical recruitment and return and reintegration. The officials committed to incorporating some of their learning, particularly in the area of pre-departure orientation and ethical recruitment.

## 2. IMPROVEMENT OF RECRUITMENT SERVICES AND REDUCTION OF MIGRATION COSTS:

The work addresses regulatory and enforcement gaps governing the recruitment industry,

mechanisms for complaints and remedy, migration costs and recruitment practices.

- In partnership with the World Bank-led Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) initiative, the project is conducting a survey on **migration costs among Pakistani low-skilled migrant workers in the construction and agriculture sectors in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates**. The survey, which will be published by March 2016, is running in parallel with similar surveys with Indian, Nepali and Filipino migrant returnees from Qatar, Ethiopian returnees from Saudi Arabia and Vietnamese migrants in Malaysia. A standardized questionnaire and research methodology are being used to ensure that the data are comparable across the migrant-sending countries and will contribute to a database of worker-paid migration costs and to the development of policies to reduce such costs. The preliminary analysis of the data from the Pakistan survey indicate that the average cost for a Pakistani worker to find a job and start work in Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates is US\$3,489. The average cost of migration to Saudi Arabia is considerably higher, at \$4,290, than moving to the United Arab Emirates, at \$2,358. Both are significantly higher than what a Nepali or Indian migrant worker are paying to migrate for jobs in Qatar.



*POEPA regional consultation in Peshawar*

- The project is working to **promote ethical recruitment** through support for the development of codes of conduct and national plans of action for self-monitoring. In **India**, the project is assisting in the establishment of an All India Federation of Recruitment Association and is in the process of signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry to support this work. Forthcoming activities in **India** include feasibility studies for alternative models for rating private recruitment agencies and a consultation with subagents, which will contribute to the knowledge building for the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, in coordination with the Swiss Development Agency and IOM. In **Nepal**, the project, in partnership with IOM and the ILO Work in Freedom project,<sup>18</sup> is assisting the Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies to develop a national plan of action,

complete with strategies and activities to promote ethical recruitment practices for all members. Among the strategies is a sector-wide monitoring mechanism for the existing ethical code of conduct. In **Pakistan**, the project has supported the Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association to develop their first-ever Code of Ethical Conduct for Licensed Overseas Employment Promoters and an accompanying action plan on the implementation of the code. The code of conduct will be launched during first quarter 2016, and the project will support its roll-out to more than 2,800 members across the country.

- The project is aiming to increase migrant workers' access to **effective mechanisms for complaints and remedy**. In **Pakistan**, the project has supported the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development to create an online complaint mechanism for migrant workers and their families. The complaint mechanism will be launched in February 2016 and will allow complainants to track their complaint and its status, ensuring maximum transparency. In **Nepal**, the project is working with the Department of Foreign Employment to strengthen its **database system** in order to track individual complaint cases, improve transparency and feed comprehensive

data reports to inform policies and strategies. The project is further working with the Department to improve the redress mechanism through better access to information and better monitoring and accountability of recruitment agencies.

- The project is also conducting two studies on **access to justice** among migrant workers from **Pakistan** and **India**. The studies focuses on migrant workers going to the GCC countries and will provide recommendations on how mechanisms for justice, including the settlement of complaints and grievances, can be strengthened.
- In **Pakistan**, an ongoing **study on recruitment practices**, including the role of intermediary agents, will be published during mid-2016.

### 3. PROTECTION IN EMPLOYMENT:

The activities range from legislation and policy review to increasing migrant workers' access to support services in the three targeted destination countries.

- The **project supports the development and review of legal and policy frameworks**, including MOUs and bilateral agreements on labour migration. In **Nepal**, this includes support to a review of the 2007 Foreign Employment Act and draft MOUs with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. In **Pakistan**, the project conducted a legal

review of the 1979 Emigration Ordinance. In **India**, the project conducted a technical review of the 1983 Emigration Act and conducted a consultation with the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry for inputs.

The project also provided inputs to the framing of a standard contract for migrant workers and an initial assessment of new decrees in the United Arab Emirates.

- The project is working with the Migrant Forum Asia (August 2014–June 2016) **to strengthen civil society support mechanisms in Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates** for coordinating and providing legal and social services to migrant workers from **India, Nepal** and **Pakistan**. This work generates a base of evidence that is critical for advocacy geared towards foreign missions, governments, human rights bodies, United Nations Special Rapporteurs, trade unions and other actors engaged in the protection of migrant workers. It also provides at least 3,000 Indian, Nepali and Pakistani migrant workers with information, advice, dispute resolution and legal support and 20 civil society organizations, trade unions, missions, human rights bodies and government officials with participation in networks and training workshops in the three GCC countries.





*GEFONT representatives meet Qatari officials*

- In **India**, the project has assisted its partner in Kerala, the Center for Indian Migration Studies (CIMS), in establishing a **database of cases of missing migrants**. CIMS compiled cases from the past ten years and shared these at the Human Rights Council in 2014 and with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, during a recent visit to Saudi Arabia.
- The project is working with the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) in **Nepal** to replicate its highly successful experiences in Hong Kong (China), Malaysia and the Republic of Korea in the project's three targeted destination countries (July 2014–March 2016) to **increase Nepali workers' access to legal and social support services**, including information, advice, dispute resolution and legal assistance. Under this partnership, GEFONT is organizing

Nepali migrant workers in Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates through the formation and mobilization of GEFONT Support Groups (GSG). In addition to helping Nepali migrant workers to organize themselves, these groups are vital in providing information on legal policies and support services. The GSG conduct programmes in local areas that focus on the rights of migrant workers and use outreach workers to informally interact with Nepali migrant workers. The GSG in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates formed under this project have reached approximately 1,273 Nepali migrant workers with assistance, including legal counselling, negotiation with employers for the return of passports, contact with the Nepali Missions and help in going home.

- In **Nepal**, the project supported a 12-day **training programme for labour attachés** about to be placed in Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in 2014, along with other officials from the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Discussions are underway to develop a similar training programme for Pakistani labour attachés (referred to as community welfare attachés).
- Upon the request from the Government of **Nepal**, the project conducted a



*Closing ceremony of the labour attaché training*

workshop for 90 staff from the Ministry of Labour and Employment and its Department of Foreign Employment. The workshop **increased the capacity of the participants to more effectively carry out the management of the systematic and transparent migration process**; the enforcement of acts, rules and regulations related to labour migration; and to coordinate smoothly with other stakeholders to protect the rights of migrant workers. Aiming to ensure good governance of labour migration, the workshop focused on issues of recruitment and labour approval procedures, complaint

and grievance handling mechanisms, and the supervision and monitoring of recruitment agencies and institutions.

- In **India**, the Society for Labour and Development along with a Trade Unions Advisory Body have been conducting **evidence-based research on the protection of migrant workers**. The research follows from a training session on international migration for trade union leaders and will open the way for developing the trade union agenda on international migration. The report will be available in early 2016.
- The **South Asian Regional Trade Union Council (SARTUC)** developed

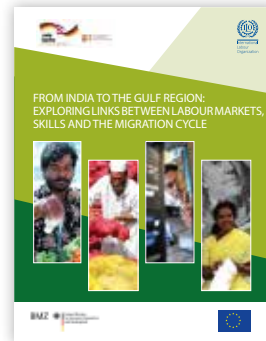
a comprehensive blueprint for the involvement of origin- and destination-country trade unions in protecting and promoting the rights of migrant workers and a timeline to achieve proposed objectives. As a part of the blueprint, SARTUC affiliates have agreed to develop a **common position on minimum standards** pertaining to four socio-economic issues: minimum wage, social security, gender inequality and labour migration. The project helped SARTUC bring together representatives of three leading trade unions in **Nepal**, which led to consensus among them on issues linked to labour migration and resulted in a paper summarizing the position of trade unions on addressing shortcomings in several areas related to foreign employment: (i) minimum wage and benefits; (ii) social security; (iii) gender equality; (iv) migration process; and (v) standard contracts. Taking the experience from the discussion in Nepal, SARTUC has been working on developing similar trade union position papers in other South Asia countries, with the ultimate aim of developing a joint position between all (SARTUC member) trade unions in the subregion.

#### **4. LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION, TRAINING AND PORTABILITY OF SKILLS:**

The work is focused on improving information on labour migration (including labour market

needs assessments), creating a system of mutual recognition of education attainment and acquired skills and the better training of prospective migrant workers.

- A study on the **skills and occupations in demand in six destination countries and links to recruitment, training, certification and accreditation in four countries of origin in South Asia** was published in mid-2015 in partnership with GIZ Nepal.<sup>19</sup> The study assessed the changing demand for male and female foreign workers in Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, India and Malaysia up to 2025. It also looked at the information, policies and systems in origin countries that hamper or support the migration of male and female workers from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, including interventions that strengthen employment networks, vocational and technical training and the issuing of permits. A number of recommendations on how governments and other actors can better align their systems for assisting migrant workers in selected sectors and trades were included. Country of origin reports were prepared for **India**<sup>20</sup> (launched in November 2015 with the Ministry of Labour's V.V. Giri National Labour Institute) and **Nepal**<sup>21</sup> (published in October 2015), with a report for **Pakistan** to be finalized in early 2016.



- In **India**, the ILO is providing technical support to the Ministry of Rural Development's Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana scheme, which is assembling an attractiveness profile of 25 countries to ultimately link skills training with overseas placements.
- The ILO, with support from the project, is a member of the **steering committee of piloted activities on skills development, certification, upgrading, recognition and skills passports in the construction and service occupations**. The project is in the design stage and involves the governments of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, in partnership with the governments of India, Pakistan and the Philippines. The effort involves working with a group of construction and service workers from India, Pakistan and the Philippines who have been recruited by Kuwaiti and United Arab Emirates employers, testing them to be certified as qualified for the jobs they were recruited to perform, conducting periodic tests and then certifying them for upgraded skills and issuing skills passports. The results are intended to inform policy initiatives for labour admission and mobility. The pilot is also a project of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, which is looking to scale up the activities.
- In **India**, the project has connected the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Ministry of Overseas Affairs to explore possibilities of creating an **interface**

between the two electronic platforms on migration for employment as a choice for workers.

## 5. MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (NEPAL ONLY):

The project supports the preparation and adoption of a migration and development strategy, road map and piloted activities that facilitate remittance-backed savings and investments.

- **A study on the links between migration and development in Nepal:** The study included the use of remittances and skills, involving primary data collection from 421 remittance-receiving households through a detailed questionnaire covering economic activities and behaviour before and after migration of family members; changes, if any, on consumption patterns, savings and investments; initiation of skills for new ventures; and changes, if any, on investment patterns. The study also explored issues of skills portability through focus group discussions with returned migrant workers. The report will be available by March 2016 and will be followed by a series of stakeholder consultations. The research also reviewed national and international good practices on financial products.



*Inter-ministerial panel discussion on migration and development*

- **High-Level Consultation on Integrating Labour Migration in Sectoral Policies in Nepal:** The project, as the ILO member of the Kathmandu Migration Group, assisted the National Planning Commission in conducting a high-level consultation on the integration of labour migration into sectoral policies in December 2014. Led by the National Planning Commission, together with the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the consultation initiated policy discourse on the links of migration to other relevant sectoral policies, such as national employment, education, health,

labour market and development policies. The discussion led to the adoption of a resolution that acknowledges the importance of migration as a central element in the Government's planning process. It also identified six steps, including setting up an interministerial mechanism (task force) under the leadership of the National Planning Commission and drafting a migration-for-development strategy that will directly feed into the national development planning.



वैदेशिक  
रोजगारीमा  
जाने नेपाली

प्रस्थान  
DEPARTURE

NEPALI WITH  
WORKING  
VISA

DEPARTURE  
प्रस्थान

कृपया धेरै अगाडि नसुन्नु

Nepali migrant workers ready to depart from the Kathmandu international airport  
©ILO/Omar Havana

# Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> See [www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/news-statements/WCMS\\_436140/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/news-statements/WCMS_436140/lang--en/index.htm).
- <sup>2</sup> ECR, or emigration clearance required, applies to workers with an ECR passport and bound for one of 17 specific countries who have not been staying abroad for three years in total. The ECR passport is given on the basis of certain criteria. See the Ministry of Indian Affairs website for further details, <http://moia.gov.in/services.aspx?ID1=109&id=m6&idp=104&mainid=73>.
- <sup>3</sup> Due to the open border policy, the data exclude those migrating to India. The data from the latest census (2011) indicate that the migration to India is approximately 37 per cent of the total.
- <sup>4</sup> Bangladesh Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (2013), Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (2014), Nepal Department of Labour and Employment (2015), Pakistan Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (2014) and the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (2012).
- <sup>5</sup> Due to the open border policy with India since the 1950s, there are no official records of the number of Nepali migrant workers in India, although reports put it equal to the number of registered Nepali migrant workers elsewhere in the world.
- <sup>6</sup> ILO and GiZ: Occupations and skills in demand in India, Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE (Kathmandu, ILO, 2015).
- <sup>7</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> ADBI, OECD/ and ILO: Labor Migration, Skills & Student Mobility in Asia (Japan, Asian Development Bank Institute, 2014).
- <sup>9</sup> Official statistics from the Department of Foreign Employment of the Ministry of Labour and Employment in Nepal and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development in Pakistan.
- <sup>10</sup> ILO: Labour migration in South Asia: A review of issues, policies and practices, International Migration Paper 108 (Kathmandu, 2011).
- <sup>11</sup> The kafala system regulates the relationship between employers and migrant workers in many countries in the Middle East in a manner that is firmly weighted towards the employer.
- <sup>12</sup> ILO: Global estimate of forced labour (Geneva, 2012).
- <sup>13</sup> Irudaya Rajan et al. (2008), in ILO: Labour migration in South Asia: A review of issues, policies and practices, International Migration Paper 108 (Geneva, 2011).
- <sup>14</sup> A sample is available on [www.ilo.org/kathmandu/whatwedo/publications/WCMS\\_378990/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/kathmandu/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_378990/lang--en/index.htm).
- <sup>15</sup> See [www.ilo.org/kathmandu/whatwedo/publications/WCMS\\_312137/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/kathmandu/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_312137/lang--en/index.htm).
- <sup>16</sup> See [www.ilo.org/islamabad/whatwedo/publications/WCMS\\_350456/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/islamabad/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_350456/lang--en/index.htm).
- <sup>17</sup> The report, Migration and resilience: Experiences from Nepal's 2015 earthquake, is available from <http://ceslam.org/index.php?pageName=publication&pid=36>.
- <sup>18</sup> ILO Work in Freedom Programme: Making migrant work safer for women from South Asia.
- <sup>19</sup> See [www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS\\_378239/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_378239/lang--en/index.htm).
- <sup>20</sup> See [www.ilo.org/newdelhi/whatwedo/publications/WCMS\\_397363/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_397363/lang--en/index.htm).
- <sup>21</sup> See [www.ilo.org/kathmandu/whatwedo/publications/WCMS\\_407963/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/kathmandu/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_407963/lang--en/index.htm).

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The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

The International Labour Organization is the United Nations' international organization responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards. The ILO is the only United Nations agency with a constitutional mandate to protect migrant workers; this mandate has been re-affirmed by the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia and the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The ILO adopts a rights-based approach to labour migration and promotes tripartite participation in migration policy.

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