



Concept Note

Mekong Dialogue on Labour Mobility

30 May 2022 | 2:00 pm – 5:30 pm Bangkok | Meeting via Zoom (*link to be shared*)

Event language: English

The Greater Mekong Subregion is considered one of the world's fastest-growing regions. With the growing integration of economies and societies, as manifested by free trade agreements and free trade areas, labour migrants play a vital role in economic development within the region. As interconnectivity and labour mobility increase across the subregion, there is an increased need for coordinated policies and programs to ensure that migration policies contribute to inclusive economic growth, protect the vulnerable, and optimize the resources of governments and the private sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has tremendously impacted migrants in various ways and stagnated labour mobility in the region. The Mekong countries' responses and instruments to manage the number of COVID-19 infections and accelerate vaccination programs, ensure the continued growth of economies, and reduce the impacts on the vulnerable have been implemented since the very beginning of the pandemic. Nearly two years on, the current need of the Mekong countries is the support to drive sustainable economic recovery to the post-pandemic world where migrants are considered one of the key actors.

This dialogue, hosted by the Kingdom of Cambodia, is being organized under the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program, with support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM). It aims to bring together experts on migration and Mekong countries to discuss and share knowledge along with good practices for economic recovery and migration management within the subregion.

The dialogue will break down the multi-sectoral links between migration and development, with a particular emphasis on responding to the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The dialogue will cover: (1) preparing for safe migration; (2) promoting healthy labour mobility; and (3) facilitating return and reintegration. It is envisaged to guide future discussions on opportunities for action and coordination, as well as lay the foundation for potential cooperation in the future through a multi-stakeholder approach among the Mekong countries, development organizations, and related partners.

Labour mobility is a cross-sectoral concern that requires a whole-of-government approach. Participants in the dialogue include officials from relevant line ministries of Mekong countries (e.g., Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs), development organizations, and related partners.

This event will be co-moderated by:

- Pinsuda Alexander, Economist (Regional Cooperation), ADB
- Geertrui Lanneau, Senior Regional Specialist for Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion, IOM



Agenda

Time (GMT+7)	Provisional Program
1:30 – 2:00 PM	Technical set up and registration
Opening	
2:00 – 2:15 PM	<p>Opening Remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Chuop Narath, Deputy Director General, General Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Cambodia • Alfredo Perdiguero, Director, Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination Division, Southeast Asia Department, ADB
	<i>Group photo (virtual screenshot)</i>
Session 1: Preparing for safe migration	
2:15 – 2:45 PM	<p><i>Safe and regular labour migration will be an important factor supporting socio-economic recovery in GMS countries, which requires stakeholders to plan for a collaborative approach. This session will explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant workers, existing protection gaps and strategies to maximize the positive impacts of resuming labour mobility.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nilim Baruah, Regional Migration Specialist for Asia and the Pacific, ILO • Maximilian Pottler, Head of Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion, IOM Thailand <p>Respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Mekong countries will be invited to respond on this topic for 3 minutes
2:45 – 3:15 PM	Open discussion
Session 2: Promoting healthy labour mobility	
3:15 – 3:45 PM	<p><i>The current pandemic has served as a stark reminder of the work that remains to be done on the intersection of migration and health. This session will look at the intersection of human mobility, health, and prevention of infectious disease transmissions, i.e. hygiene and living standards for migrant workers, and discuss effective interventions to facilitate healthy movements and post-arrival conditions.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Patrick Duigan, Regional Migration Health Advisor, IOM • Rikard Elfving, Senior Social Sector Specialist, ADB <p>Respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Mekong countries will be invited to respond on this topic for 3 minutes
3:45 – 4:15 PM	Open discussion



Session 3: Facilitating return and reintegration	
4:15 – 4:45 PM	<p><i>This session will discuss some of the challenges Mekong countries faced during the COVID-induced mass returns of migrant workers, including access to livelihoods, social safety nets and protection of migrants in vulnerable situations. It will also explore existing best practice and guidance on return and reintegration, discussing both ASEAN Guidelines on Effective Return and Reintegration as well as IOM’s Integrated Approach to Reintegration and explore areas of cooperation in the subregion to target perceived gaps.</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peppi Kiviniemi-Siddiq, Senior Regional Specialist for Migrant Protection and Assistance, IOM• Rebecca Napier-Moore, Technical Officer, TRIANGLE, ILO <p>Respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two Mekong countries will be invited to respond on this topic for 3 minutes
4:45 – 5:15 PM	Open discussion
Closing	
5:15 – 5:30 PM	<p>Closing Remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr. Maria Nenette Motus, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, IOM