

# Written statement by the OECD for the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, dear colleagues

It is my great pleasure to contribute, on the behalf of the OECD, to the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

**The Asia Pacific region is a global migration hub** with more than 5 million migrant workers deployed every year to Gulf countries and within Asia and about 1.5 million additional people moving to the OECD, including to Australia and New Zealand.

What is more, we count almost 3 million Asian international students globally many of whom study in the region.

**There is no denying that migration has always been a complex, even a divisive issue.** Those who have chosen to adhere to the Global Compact for Migration recognise that despite its challenges, *“Migration has been part of the human experience throughout history, [...] it is a source of prosperity, innovation and sustainable development in our globalized world”*.

The evidence gathered by the OECD for over 40 years supports these principles. **Migration, if well managed, can be beneficial for countries of origin and destination as well as for migrants and host communities.**

- first, in many OECD countries facing rapid ageing, migration is driving labour force growth. Over the past decade, migrants accounted for 65% of the increase in the workforce in the United States and 90% in Europe. Gulf economies would never have developed the way they did without the sweat of Asian workers. And a number of large Asian economies are ageing rapidly and will increasingly rely on labour mobility to meet their high and lower skills needs in a number of key sectors.
- Second, migration often has a positive fiscal impact. In most OECD countries, immigrants contribute more in tax and social contributions than they receive in individual benefits. This is also true, in the Asia Pacific region where most migrant workers are temporary.
- Finally migrants bring skills and a dedication to build a better future for themselves and their families.

**However, for the full positive impact of legal migration to materialise, we need to address migrants’ vulnerabilities and foster their inclusion.** We have seen these vulnerabilities recently: the high number of stranded migrants; their over-exposure to infection because of precarious housing conditions and concentration in front line jobs; the way they fall through gaps in our social safety nets. These are clear limits to the fairness and solidarity of our economic and social systems.

This is exactly where the Global Compact for Migration can be helpful. Its roadmap for making concrete progress is already producing results.

Among these results: Better emergency preparedness plans have been developed; policies have changed to improve housing conditions for migrant workers; relief measures allowed registered migrants and their family to remain temporarily in host countries. However, more needs to be done if we want to build back better.

**The pandemic is not only “an x-ray, revealing fractures in the fragile skeleton of our societies” as rightly indicated the UNSG but is also an accelerator of change.** This applies notably to automation and digitalisation which are expected to transform migration movements as they free lower skilled labour in origin countries and reduce the need for foreign workers in destination countries. Reconciling these imbalances will not be easy. Here again the Global Compact for Migration could be particularly helpful as it paves the way for new and innovative forms of skills partnerships.

The idea of “Skills Mobility Partnerships” attracted much attention during the negotiation phase of the Global Compact for Migration. By involving employers as well as training institutions, by involving countries of origin and destination, these programmes can help increase skills supply and enhance the match with demand in destination countries. The OECD is committed to work closely with member States and all relevant organisations to develop and evaluate these innovative programmes.

**Finally in order for countries to design and deliver effective policies we need better data.** Our effort to improve migration statistics should also help us to inform a constructive public debate on migration. We need to develop our information system not only to support policy development but also to provide evidence on issues, and at the geographical levels, that matter to people.

The OECD is firmly committed to strengthening the global evidence on migration. In the region, we have built a longstanding and effective cooperation with ILO and ADBI through our “Annual Roundtable on labour migration in Asia” which directly speaks to Objective 1 of the global compact.

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Let me close by underlining that our work shows that **migration is not a threat**. Migration is a hope, the hope of the migrants and their families for a better life, and for all of us for a more prosperous and harmonious world. Now that the Global Compact for Migration provides us with a map, let's keep moving !



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