

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION IN ASIA: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF BUSINESS

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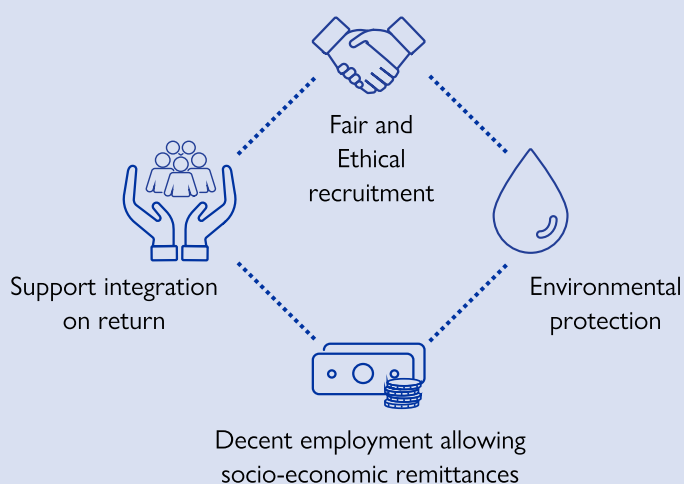
Asia is the most disaster-prone area in the world and one of the most vulnerable to the impacts of **environmental degradation and climate change**. This is not only due to its geographic exposure to these risks, but also to its underlying socio-political and economic vulnerabilities that turn hazards into disasters.

While **migration** in the context of environmental and climate change is often seen as a failure to adapt in situ, migration has long constituted a key livelihood diversification and adaptation strategy. However, migrants often enter migration routes from vulnerable positions impacting the left-behind families as well as the migrants.

Businesses strongly impact human and labour rights of migrant workers, their families and communities. These can be positive through access to employment, or negative such as through pollution, unethical recruitment of workers, or forcibly evicting communities.

Under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPR) businesses have a responsibility to respect human rights in their supply chains and provide effective remedy if any breaches occur.

How can business support migration as an adaptation strategy?



A scoping study conducted in 2020, in partnership between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) sought to understand the linkages between climate change, environmental degradation and international labour migration with a particular focus on the role of business.

It focused not only on the impacts of environmental and climate change on forced labour, but also on the impacts of certain economic sectors in contributing to environmental destruction and forced labour.

Key Findings from Phase I



The impacts of climate change are leading to the further indebtedness of the most vulnerable. This aggravates people's likelihood to find themselves in situations of forced and bonded labour as they migrate to escape socio-environmental stressors.

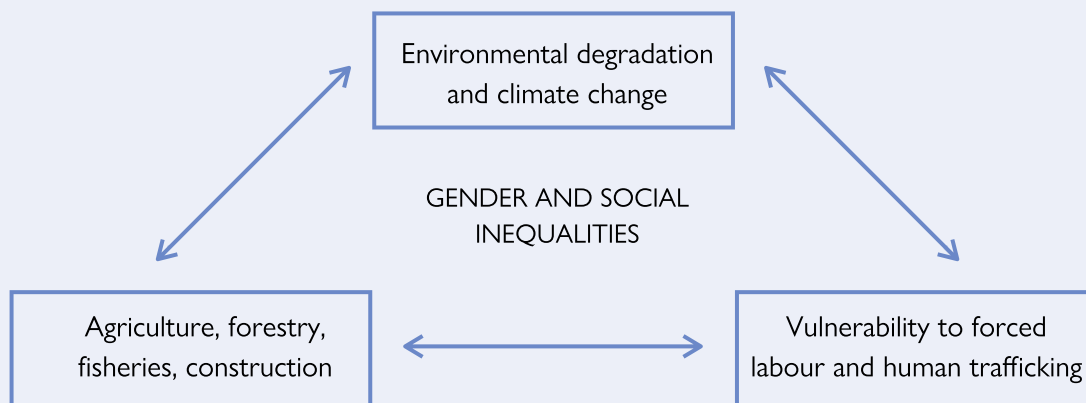


Fisheries, agriculture, forestry and construction are both impacted by and involved in environmental destruction and forced labour. The environmental impacts of these sectors further aggravate vulnerabilities of communities, magnifying the role of environmental drivers on other migration drivers. At the same time, migrant workers employed in these sectors are often known to suffer from exploitation.



There is no coherent research that links environmental change at origin with forced labour at destination across key international migration corridors, or on how specific industries can alleviate the vulnerabilities that migrant workers experience in both origin and destination. This translates into gaps in policy and implementation.

Interactions in the environment and international labour migration nexus across sectors



CONCEPT BY SARA VIGIL

Phase II: CREST Environmental and Climate Change Study

This phase will focus on agricultural labour supply chains across selected migration corridors (Cambodia and Myanmar to Thailand and Bangladesh and Indonesia to Malaysia).

Research Questions

- How does environmental and climate change at origin affect international labour migration in Asia and how does it impact on vulnerabilities of migrants employed in the agricultural sector across selected migration corridors?
- What can businesses, in collaboration with States and civil society actors, do in order to address the environment-international labour migration nexus and to promote safe, orderly and regular labour migration that can act as an adaptation strategy to environmental change?



Selected Migration Corridors

Objectives

- **INFORM** policymakers, businesses and the general public how to maximize the potential of international labour migration as a short- or long-term adaptation strategy to environmental and climate change.
- **INFORM** relevant government agencies in Malaysia and Thailand on policy measures required to better protect migrant workers in agricultural labour supply chains.
- **INFORM** businesses on corporate responsibility measures and organizational policies required to better protect migrant workers in agricultural labour supply chains.
- **ENHANCE** the overall evidence-base on how the potential of international labour migration could be maximized.



Target Audience



Government



Businesses



General Public

This study builds on ongoing policy and research efforts around climate change and migration, and will contribute to the following key policy agendas:



- The Paris Agreement and its Task Force on Displacement
- The Platform on Disaster Displacement
- The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
- The 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals
- The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights



IOM CREST is a regional partnership initiative that aims to realize the potential of business to uphold the human and labour rights of migrant workers in their operations and supply chains.

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