

A stylized map of Myanmar and its neighboring regions, including South Asia and Southeast Asia. The map is rendered in shades of blue and grey. Several large, light blue arrows originate from Myanmar and point towards various directions, symbolizing migration patterns. One arrow points north-northeast, another points west, and several others point south and south-east towards countries like Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

# MIGRANTS FROM MYANMAR AND RISKS FACED ABROAD

A desk study



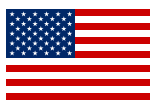
International Organization for Migration

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADRC	Asian Disaster Reduction Centre
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCSFC	Central Committee of Storm and Flood Control
CFEDMHA	Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance
DDPM	Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Thailand
EAG	Ethnic Armed Group
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency, United States
GDCD	General Directorate of Civil Defense, Saudi Arabia
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
HFA	Hyogo Framework of Action
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDMC	The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Viet Nam
MICIC	Migrants In Countries In Crisis Initiative
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SCDF	Singapore Civil Defense Force
UN-ACT	United Nations Action for Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime





# SUMMARY

The Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative is a State-led political process, co-chaired by the United States and the Philippines, that has produced a set of guidelines and a compilation of effective practices on how to better protect and assist migrants in the event of a crisis. As a complement to this consultative process, IOM is leading the implementation of a capacity-building programme targeting four countries: Guatemala, Mexico, Myanmar and Thailand. The overall aim of the programme is to develop and disseminate tools that can help governments and non-governmental actors in countries of origin and destination to better factor in migrants in emergency preparedness and response measures.

This study aims to contribute to the capacity-building programme through detailed understanding of crises potentially affecting Myanmar migrants in destination countries. The study approach is to highlight “hotspots” in which large number of Myanmar migrants abroad could face crises. It then examines what potential crises affecting migrants abroad mean to the Government of Myanmar and other actors in terms of emergency preparedness, response and recovery.

This study looks at the main population flows currently taking place from Myanmar, including their type, direction and size, the stocks of Myanmar nationals abroad, their composition (migration status, gender and age) and evolution over time (including a specific attention to emerging trends). It then highlights the main risk factors that Myanmar nationals face abroad, in areas of transit and destination. It also looks at the main crises that might potentially hit the areas through or towards which the most significant population flows tend to take place. Finally, the study examines the national institutional structures in charge of assisting migrants caught in emergencies while abroad and their mandate, structure and capacities. The study also identifies potential for capacity-building of governmental and non-governmental actors that can play a role in assisting Myanmar migrants in crisis, in the attempt to provide guidance for the subsequent implementation of the MICIC capacity-building programme.



# INTRODUCTION

Covering 676,578 km<sup>2</sup> of land and sea, Myanmar is situated in South-Eastern Asia in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), and shares borders with Thailand (2,416 km), China (2,129 km), Bangladesh (271 km), Lao People's Democratic Republic (238 km) and India (1,468 km) – and borders Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal to the west.

Myanmar has a population of over 50.3 million inhabitants with an estimated 33 per cent residing in urban areas and 67 per cent in rural areas (Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 2014). The country experiences a variety of population movements due to economic reasons, conflict and instability, and disasters and is the largest migration source country in the GMS with an estimated 10 per cent of its population residing abroad (IOM, 2015a).

Neighbouring Thailand hosts almost 70 per cent of Myanmar's international migrants, according to the 2014 Myanmar Census (GMS TRIANGLE Project, 2015). The second most significant country of destination for international migrants from Myanmar is Malaysia, hosting an estimated half a million Myanmar nationals (representing 15% of Myanmar migrants abroad). Other main destination countries include China (4.6%), Singapore (3.9%), United States (2%) and India (1%). Japan, Republic of Korea and other destinations also host notable numbers of migrants from Myanmar.

Decades of relative poverty in a region with prospering economies, coupled with changing demographic profiles in relatively wealthier economies, have served as powerful push factors for migrants. The limited formal channels of migration available force the majority of those who move to use informal channels and the services of brokers and smugglers. Many end up taking 3D jobs (demanding, dirty and dangerous) abroad. These combined factors make migrants especially vulnerable to crises of all kind, including disasters, instability, livelihood insecurity, violence and conflicts that threaten their lives and well-being in areas of destination. The specific conditions of vulnerability of migrants from Myanmar were

recently highlighted in the 2011 Bangkok floods, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of Myanmar nationals with limited access to in situ assistance and evacuation options.

## METHODOLOGY

The overall aim of the study is to provide up-to-date information on migrants from Myanmar and the risks they face abroad and propose a set of recommendations on how to assist them in the event of a crisis. The study focuses mainly on migrants' involvement in situations that are defined as "crises" or "emergencies" for the migrants' country of transit or destination, rather than on migrants' day-to-day conditions of vulnerability. Such crises would include natural or man-made disasters, civil or international conflict and generalized violence.

To achieve this aim, a detailed analysis of the main flows and stocks of Myanmar migrants was undertaken. This allowed for understanding migrants' numbers and characteristics, the main routes they follow, and the main risks that they face in transit and at their destinations – with a specific attention to migration and crisis "hotspots". In addition, the existing governmental and non-governmental structures in place to assist them at home and abroad are also analysed.

The study relies on secondary data sources (both publications and online databases), identified through a desk review of available literature on Myanmar migrants. Specific sources of data have been consulted to investigate the numbers, circumstances and assistance provided to refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs), including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international humanitarian organizations that assist refugees, asylum seekers and other types of migrants from Myanmar. Data on Myanmar



migrants in host countries, such as the United States and Australia, is obtained from the host countries themselves. Additional data and analysis is derived from various academic publications, opinion pieces and media reports on the issue.

In order to supplement the information gathered through the literature review, representatives from seven institutions were interviewed. The institutions were identified and contacted with the assistance of International Organization for Migration (IOM) missions in Myanmar and destination countries. Through structured questionnaires, interviewees were asked to provide insights on the main migration trends and patterns, support provided to migrants from Myanmar and specific conditions and potential crises that migrants face at their destinations. The responses offer valuable insights on the experiences of some of the agencies that work to reduce migrants' vulnerability in crises. An analysis of the responses is provided in the section that looks at different migration management actors in Myanmar.

## LIMITATIONS

The data sources used for this study, while overall fairly reliable, suffer from some inevitable flaws. Census data, for example, only account for households that reported one or more members outside the country and might not fully reflect undocumented migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and children of migrants born abroad. It is likely that the census data also include a large proportion of refugees that are hosted in Thailand, Malaysia and other countries because household respondents may not distinguish whether their household members are refugees or other categories of migrants. It serves to highlight the extent and destination of migration from Myanmar, as well as the individual migrants' characteristics, but probably underestimates the number of migrants, largely because it undercounts undocumented migrants.

In general, while there is abundant data on documented migrants from Myanmar, information on irregular migration is widely incomplete and existing estimates are likely to be inaccurate. However, existing data allows to paint a fairly reliable picture of where Myanmar nationals

abroad reside, representing a reasonable estimate for the country's migrants' stocks and flows.

This report is focused on identifying potential crises situations that may affect migrants from Myanmar abroad in order to enable informed forms of assistance in support of the larger MICIC initiative. It therefore does not delve into the underlying causal factors that lead to the decision to migrate or the circumstances of migration. IOM's MICIC 2015 Myanmar Country Profile identifies the underlying factors behind emigration from the country – including limited livelihood opportunities, poor socioeconomic conditions, and insecurity caused by conflict and frequent disasters (IOM, 2015b). Addressing these factors will be key to longer-term reduction of migrants' vulnerability.

# MIGRATION FROM MYANMAR

## MAIN PATTERNS AND EMERGING TRENDS

### MIGRATION TRENDS

Migration from Myanmar is overwhelmingly directed to other Asian countries. Over 70 per cent of Myanmar nationals abroad live in countries in the GMS. Myanmar is one of the major countries of origin of migrants among the 10 Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).<sup>6</sup> IOM (2009) estimates that 10 per cent of the country's population resides abroad.

A limited number of Myanmar migrants benefit from legal recruitment governed by bilateral agreements between sending and receiving countries, and migrate in a formal, regular manner. Due to the

difficulties and costs entailed by these procedures, a majority of the country's migrants, instead, use irregular and informal channels that are quicker, less expensive and require no legal documents (PIDS, 2012). Migrating through irregular channels is often accompanied by the use of smugglers and informal brokers, or takes place along dangerous jungle or sea routes, adding to millions of Myanmar migrants' risk conditions. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2012) indicates that 112,384 migrants from Myanmar attempting to enter Thailand illegally were apprehended in 2008 alone. This figure rose to 113,894 in 2009, 117,681 in 2010, and 118,100 in 2011, before declining to 75,546 and 84,543 in 2012 and 2013 respectively (UNODC, 2012:59).

<sup>6</sup> Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

#### Map 1. Myanmar



Source: Google, INEGI, 2015.

**Table 1. Migrants from Myanmar by major region of destination: 1990–2015**

Major area, region, country or area of destination	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	% Change 1990/2015
Africa	220	140	99	118	184	232	5
Asia	540,337	758,098	1,060,237	1,631,480	2,316,946	2,711,323	80
Europe	12,257	12,115	12,259	15,682	22,655	26,733	54
Latin America and the Caribbean	55	62	73	83	118	135	59
North America	22,172	28,681	36,312	53,541	71,700	112,258	80
Oceania	10,039	12,032	12,802	14,146	24,785	31,116	67
Total	585,080	811,128	1,121,782	1,715,050	2,436,388	2,881,797	79

Source: UN DESA, 2015.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)<sup>7</sup> has a comprehensive data set on migration that provides figures for migration from Myanmar disaggregated by region and country of destination. Table 1 shows the steep increase in the number of migrants from Myanmar between 1990 and 2015, with Asia, North America and Oceania standing out as the main regions of destination both in absolute terms and for the relative change in presence.

Although they are not in this list, Bangladesh and Pakistan hosted respectively 197,625 and 93,057 migrants from Myanmar in 2013 according to UN DESA common set of indicators that list the top 5 migration sending and receiving countries. Bangladesh also had the highest refugee population from Myanmar, estimated at 230,674 in 2012.

However, the UN DESA data also appears to omit Myanmar migrants in China, which is reported as the third leading destination in the 2014 census, with 92,263 migrants. Singapore is also not captured as a destination country for Myanmar migrants in the UN DESA data but is among the leading destinations in the 2014 census data.

According to the 2014 Myanmar Census, over 2 million Myanmar nationals live abroad (Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 2014). However, IOM (2015) estimates that the number of Myanmar migrants might be much higher, with about 2.3 million residing in Thailand alone. The International Labour Organization (ILO) concurs that estimates of Myanmar nationals abroad are much higher than reported in the census (ILO, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> See United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (UN DESA, 2015). Trends in international migrant stock: Migrants by destination and origin (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2015).

The census results indicate that over 70 per cent of Myanmar nationals abroad reside in neighbouring Thailand, 57 per cent of them men and 43 per cent women, as shown in Table 2. Although these figures do not account for irregular or undocumented migrants, they confirm the role Thailand plays as the main country of destination for most migrants from Myanmar. Malaysia is the second most important destination, hosting 15 per cent of the Myanmar nationals abroad – 81 per cent men and 19 per cent women.

The census estimates that 3.9 per cent of migrants from Myanmar reside in Singapore, 49 per cent of them male and 51 per cent female. 4.6 reside in China, while Japan, the Republic of Korea, India, United States and others account together for 6.4 per cent. Figure 1 maps these destinations and highlights some of the emerging destinations, such as South Africa and Brazil (Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 2014).

Migrants from Myanmar mostly come from rural areas and are members of the Arakanese, Bamar, Indo-Myanmar, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Mon, Gurkha (Nepalese), Shan and Tavoyan ethnic groups. They are mostly single, aged between 12 and 55 years, with low levels of education (UNODC, 2012:26).

As shown in Table 2, men account for 61 per cent and women for 39 per cent of the total migrants from Myanmar. The data, however, show a trend towards the feminization of the migration from Myanmar. The growth in female migration is due to a combination of economic, social and political factors, including aspirations for a better life, lack of employment and income disparities back home, and high labour demand in sectors where women are perceived to have an advantage in countries of destination (such as the for-export-only garment and textile factories in the Mae Sot, Thailand,

**Table 2. Total number of Myanmar migrants abroad**

Major area, region, country or area of destination	Gender				Total	
	Male	%	Female	%	2010	%
Thailand	812,798	57	605,674	42	1,418,572	70
Malaysia	245,772	81	58,224	19	303,996	15
Singapore	39,078	49	40,581	51	79,659	4
China	53,126	57	39,137	42	92,263	4
Japan	4,314	57	3,283	43	7,597	0.4
Republic of Korea	14,118	97	474	3	14,592	0.7
India	10,917	61	7,058	39	17,975	0.9
United States	21,937	58	15,640	41	37,577	2
Other	31,108	62	18,671	37	49,779	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,233,168</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>788,742</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2,021,910</b>	<b>100</b>

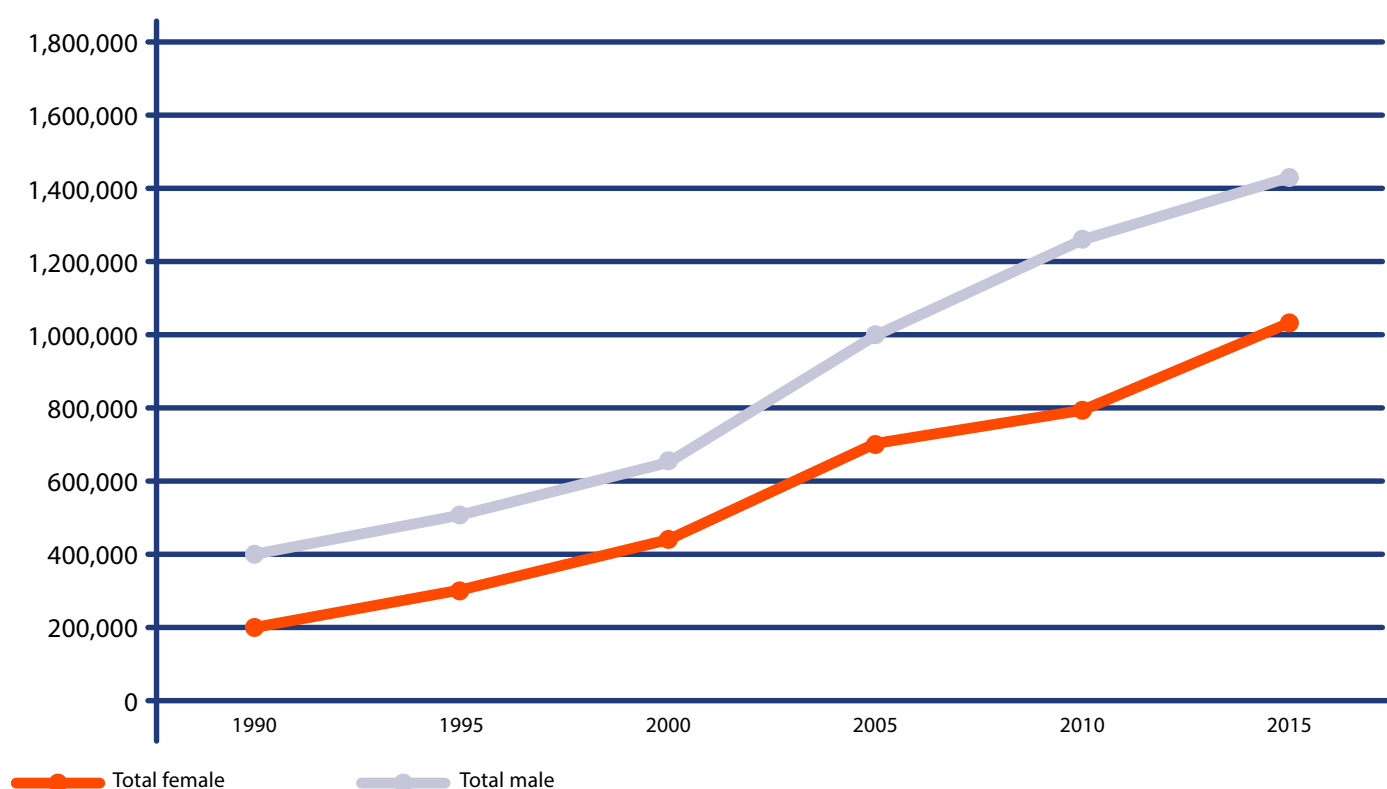
Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

area) (Sijapati, 2015:4). High demand of domestic workers in prosperous countries in Asia such as Singapore and Gulf Cooperation Council countries also leads to higher female migration. Sijapati (2015) has also shown that a significant number of women migrate through informal channels or are in irregular status.

As a consequence, male and female migration have grown in parallel over the last decades (see Figure 2). However, stark differences in male and female migration trends exist in the various countries

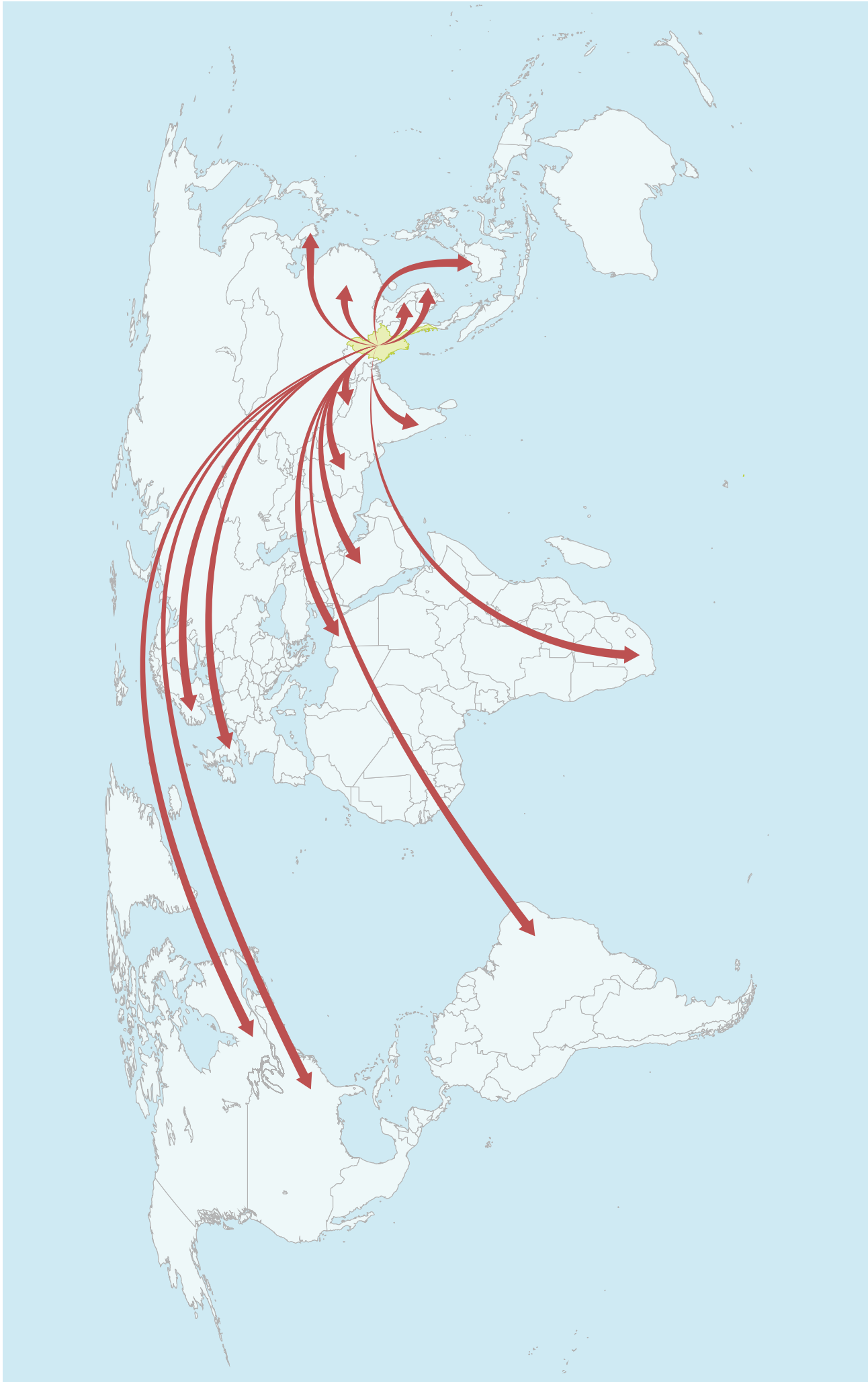
of destination. Figure 3 shows that Singapore is the only country to host more female than male migrants from Myanmar. On the other end of the spectrum, women only represent 3 per cent of the Myanmar migrants in the Republic of Korea and 19 per cent in Malaysia. These huge differences largely depend on the jobs available to migrants in the host countries: in the latter countries most of the demand is for male workforce and the few women either accompany their husbands or work in the service, domestic and manufacturing sectors

**Figure 1. Myanmar migration trends by gender, 1990–2015**



Fuente: UN DESA, 2015.

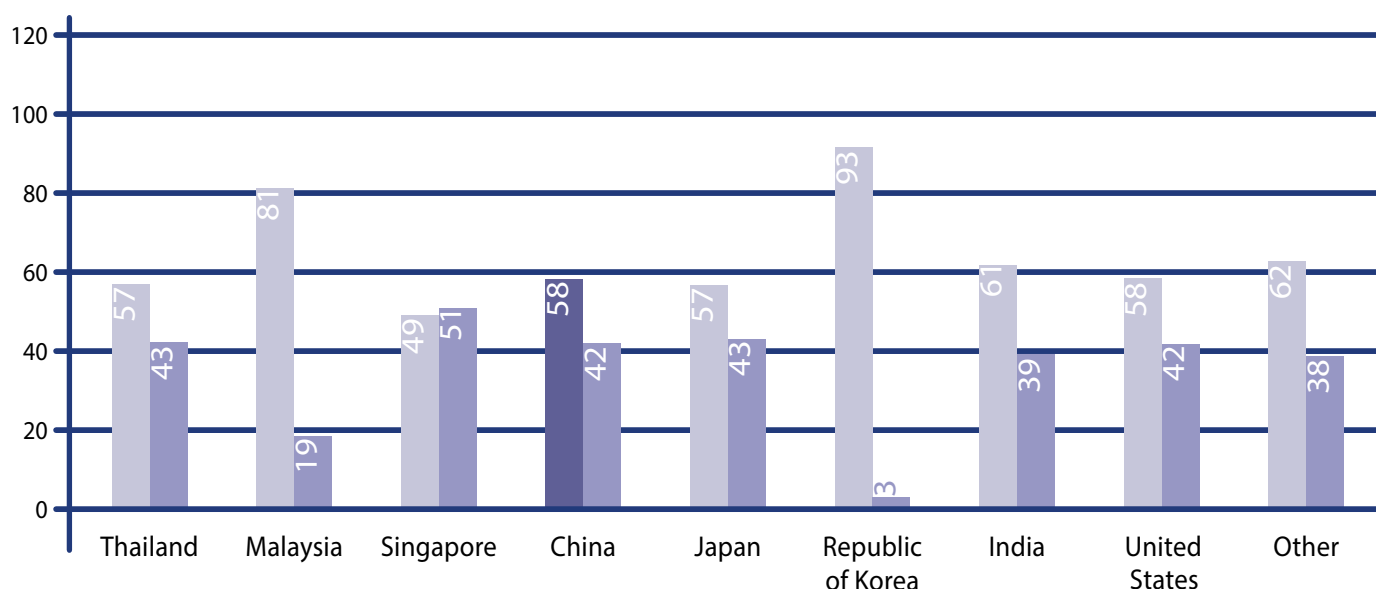
Figure 2. Main destinations of migrants from Myanmar



Source: Ian Mackay, 2016. <http://ian.mackay.net/pat/map/world.html>



**Figure 3. Proportion of male to female migrants abroad by country of residence, 2014**



Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

(GMS TRIANGLE Project, 2015). In Singapore, instead, female migrants from countries in the Asia-Pacific region are in high demand. As local women enter the labour force and experience higher social status, they seek to employ foreign domestic workers to take care of their domestic responsibilities (Sijapati, 2015:4). Many other migrate for education or family reasons.

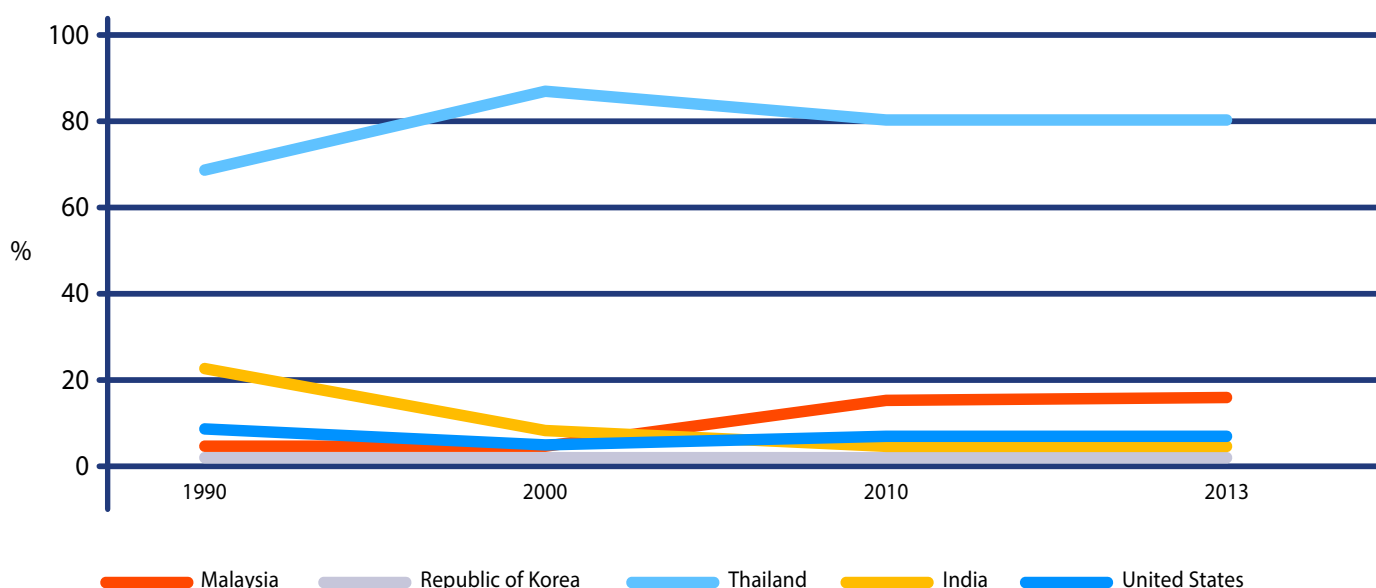
Figure 4 shows the growth in relative importance of Thailand as a destination of male migrants from Myanmar over the last decades. Conversely, male migration to India has declined sharply since the 1990s – the result of both the increase in the

number of migrants directed to other countries and the decline in absolute terms of the number of migrants destined for India. The importance of other countries for male migrants from Myanmar remained relatively constant between 1990 and 2013, with the exception of the recent increase in importance of Malaysia as a destination.

The migration of women from Myanmar shows similar trends, with the only difference being a larger share of migrant women to India and the United States (Figure 5).

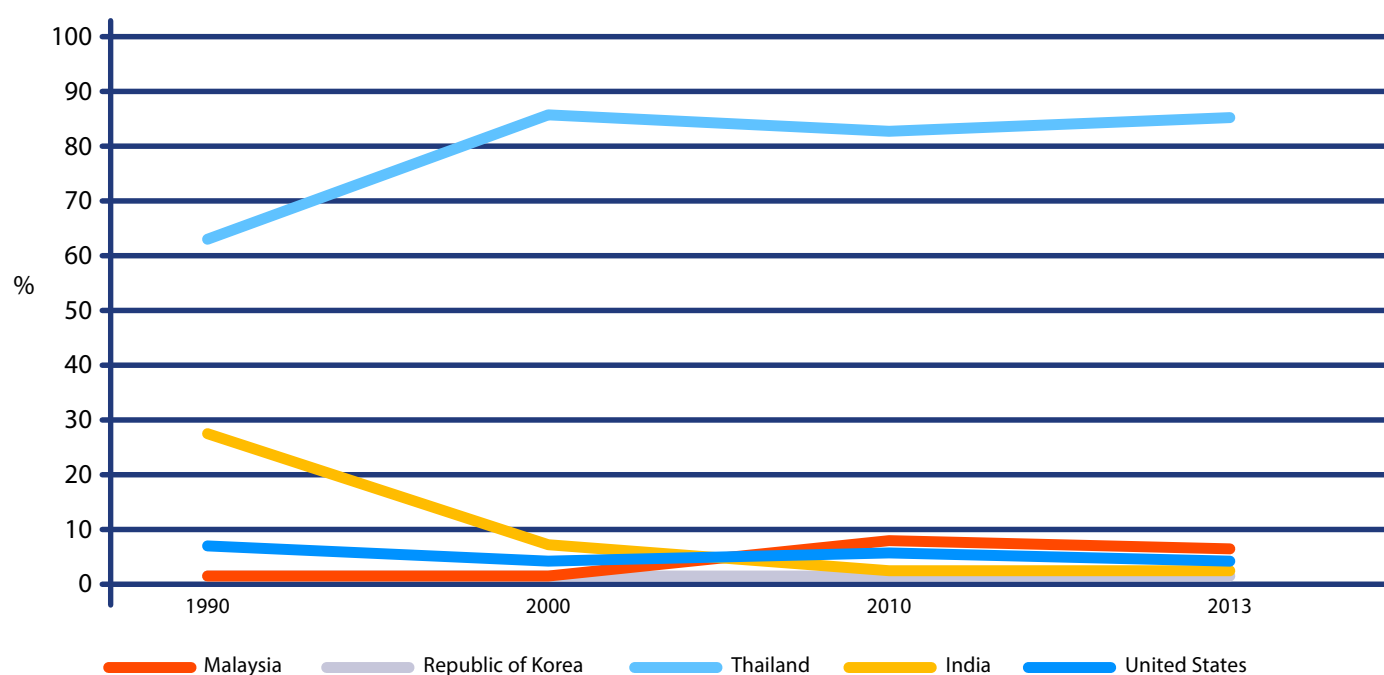
UN DESA data provides additional insights into migration trends from Myanmar between 1990 and

**Figure 4. Male migration trends from Myanmar, 1990–2013**



Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

**Figure 5. Female migration trends from Myanmar, 1990–2013**



Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

2015. As shown in Table 3, in 2015, 12 countries represented the destination for 99.43 per cent of the Myanmar migrants. Thailand remained the top destination, hosting 68.65 per cent and the other leading destinations were Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh and the United States. Table V in Annex A reveals some of the emerging trends in migration from Myanmar. Egypt and South Africa have become some of the new destinations for migrants from Myanmar with growing numbers from 1990 to 2015. Migration to the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam has also risen rapidly during

the same period. Most other countries are hosting an increasing number of migrants from Myanmar with the notable exceptions being Lao People's Democratic Republic, India, Pakistan, Greece, France and Argentina. Brazil appears to be a new destination for migrants from Myanmar having recorded migrants only in the last few years.

8 The UN DESA figures do not correspond with the Myanmar 2014 Census results. Some countries such as Pakistan are not shown as leading destination countries in the UN DESA data. Countries such as Saudi Arabia are not shown as leading destinations in the census data.

**Table 3. Total Myanmar migration to leading destinations, 1990–2015<sup>3</sup>**

Main destination countries	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	% Change 1990–2005	% of 2015 total
Thailand	229,504	436,777	734,129	1,150,168	1,648,602	1,978,348	88	68
Malaysia	4,568	10,170	16,841	120,771	241,430	252,292	98	9
Saudi Arabia	89,529	101,950	104,750	129,398	167,772	202,720	56	7
Bangladesh	125,851	128,499	131,147	160,780	190,412	201,346	37	7
United States	19,835	25,686	32,588	47,838	63,676	103,291	81	3
India	85,706	73,795	61,884	57,177	52,470	50,587	-69	2
Australia	9,676	11,438	12,120	13,340	23,270	28,916	66	1
United Kingdom	10,359	9,891	9,590	10,194	11,629	13,064	21	0.5
Republic of Korea	88	552	1,193	1,976	3,542	11,514	99	0.4
Viet Nam	963	2,690	6,807	7,834	9,356	11,187	91	0.4
Canada	2,337	2,995	3,724	5,703	8,024	8,967	74	0.3
Norway	30	47	56	514	2,433	3,136	99	0.1

Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

**Table 4. Female Myanmar migration to leading destinations, 1990–2015**

Main destination countries	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	% Change 1990–2005	% of 2015 total
Thailand	91,556	193,116	339,199	534,912	757,863	966,851	90	78
Malaysia	1,391	3,090	5,170	35,471	69,661	70,798	98	6
Saudi Arabia	29,975	33,956	34,740	40,440	49,688	64,628	54	5
United States	10,094	12,963	16,321	23,844	32,285	52,524	81	4
India	41,179	35,551	29,922	27,710	25,498	24,613	-67	2
Bangladesh	15,920	16,223	16,526	19,802	23,077	24,161	34	2
Australia	4,934	5,876	6,120	6,830	11,900	14,635	66	1
United Kingdom	5,501	5,253	5,107	5,436	6,156	7,009	21	0.5
Canada	1,199	1,545	1,928	2,929	4,099	4,584	74	0.4
Viet Nam	394	1,138	2,720	2,822	3,452	4,386	91	0.3
Norway	5	14	18	217	1,146	1,549	99	0.1

Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

Again, some slight differences exist in the destination of female migration. As shown in Table 4, the United States rank fourth, followed by India, while the Republic of Korea is not among the top destinations. Female migrants concentrated in Thailand even more than male migrants (77.75% of the total).

The number of migrants from Myanmar in all these destinations has grown between 1990 and 2015,<sup>9</sup>

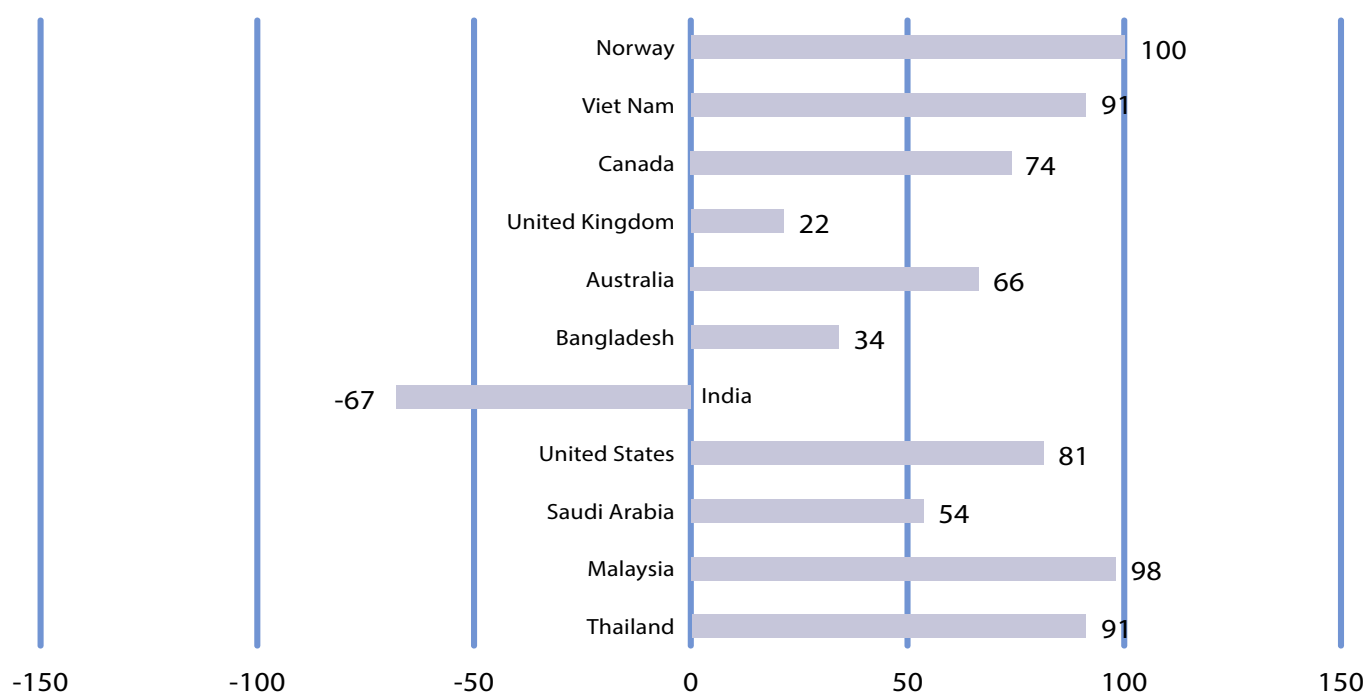
except for India,<sup>10</sup> which appears to have had negative percentage change for both males and females (Figures 6 and 8).

Figures 9, 10 and 11 show a breakdown by age and sex of the Myanmar migrant group in each destination. Thailand hosts a much larger portion of young migrants (0–19 years old) than any other country, Malaysia a relatively larger portion of the migrants between 20 and 49, and the United

<sup>9</sup> The percentage growth is calculated as change in percentage between the single years 1990 and 2015 and does not reflect fluctuations in the intervening years in any.

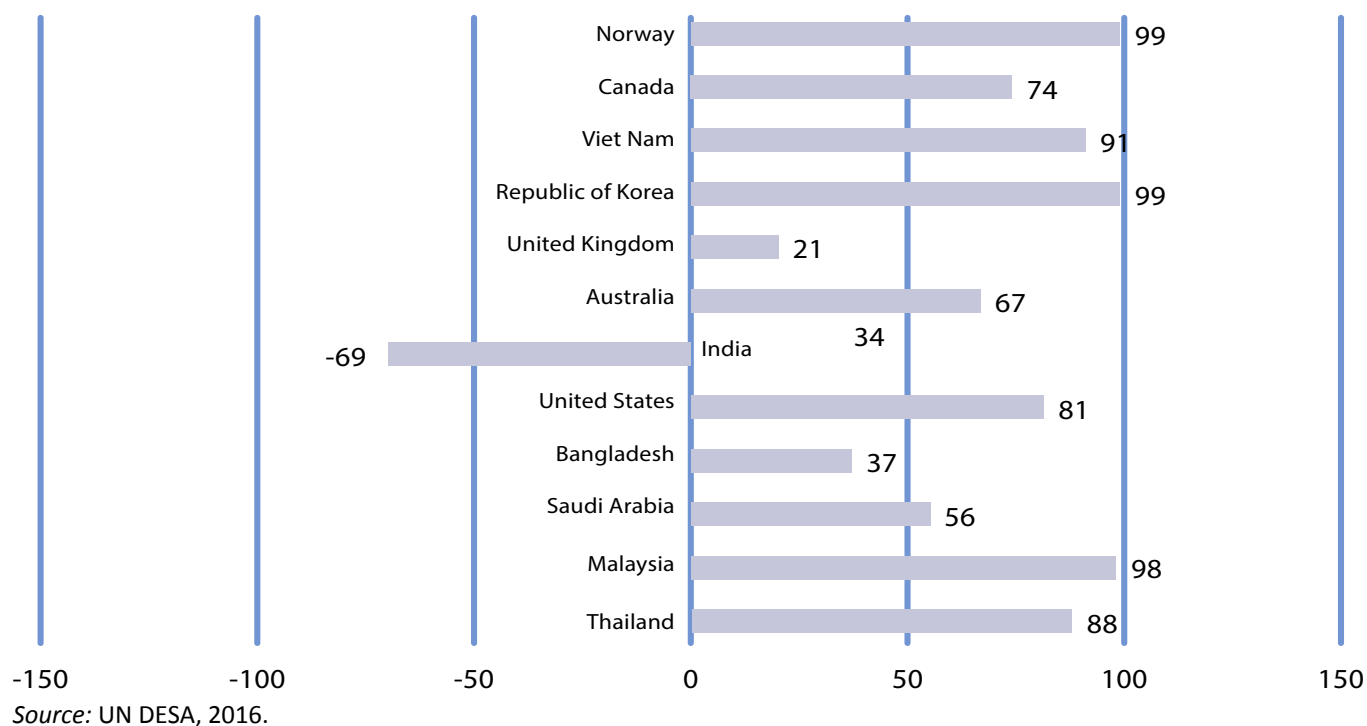
<sup>10</sup> Pakistan also shows negative trend in number of migrants from Myanmar during the same period but is not included here among leading destinations.

**Figure 6. Per cent change, Myanmar female migration, 1990–2015**



Source: UN DESA, 2016.

**Figure 7. Percentage change in total Myanmar migrants, 1990–2015**



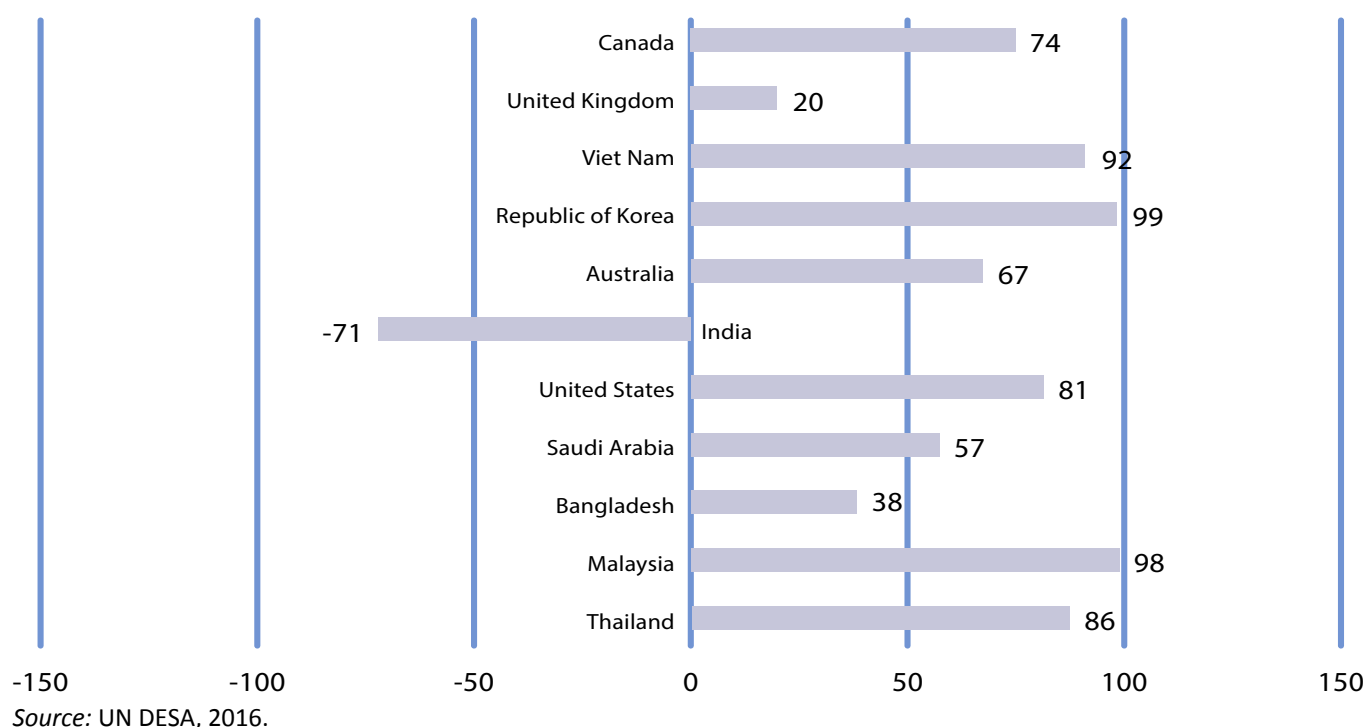
States, of migrants 50 or more years old (with women being overrepresented in this age group).

The number of children of Myanmar origin living abroad is also significant – whether they were born abroad or moved abroad at a later stage. Although some of them may be unregistered, estimates of their number do exist. The 2014 Census results shows that there are 33,775 children aged 0–4 and 59,385 children aged 5–14 abroad. Myanmar

international migrants aged 15 to 19 were estimated at 229,407 (GMS TRIANGLE Project, 2015).

The formal registration of unskilled Myanmar migrants in Thailand in 2004 recorded 93,082 children (Chantavanitch, 2012). Though Thailand officially recognizes the right of all children to attend school regardless of their immigration status, many of them may not actually be able to access schooling. Against an estimated 200,000

**Figure 8. Percentage change in male Myanmar migrants, 1990–2015**



**Table 5. Proportion of migrants by country of destination, sex and age group, 2014**

Age	Gender	Thailand	Malaysia	Singapore	China	Japan	Republic of Korea	India	United States	Other
0–9	Male	82	7	2	4	0.2	0.1	2	3	2
	Female	82	6	2	4	0.2	0.0	2	3	2
	Total	82	6	2	4.0	0.2	0.1	2	3	2
10–19	Male	77	11	1	8	0.1	0.1	1	1	1.1
	Female	82	4	3	8	0.1	0.0	1	1	1
	Total	79	8	2	8	0.1	0.1	1	1	1
20–49	Male	63	22	4	4	0.4	1	1	2	3
	Female	76	8	6	5	1	0.1	1	2	3
	Total	68	17	4	4	0.4	1	1	2	3
50+	Male	58	12	6	4	1	1	2	7	9
	Female	63	5	6	6	1	0.1	2	9	7
	Total	60	9	6	5	1	1	2	8	8
Total		70	15	4	5	0.4	1	1	2	3

Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

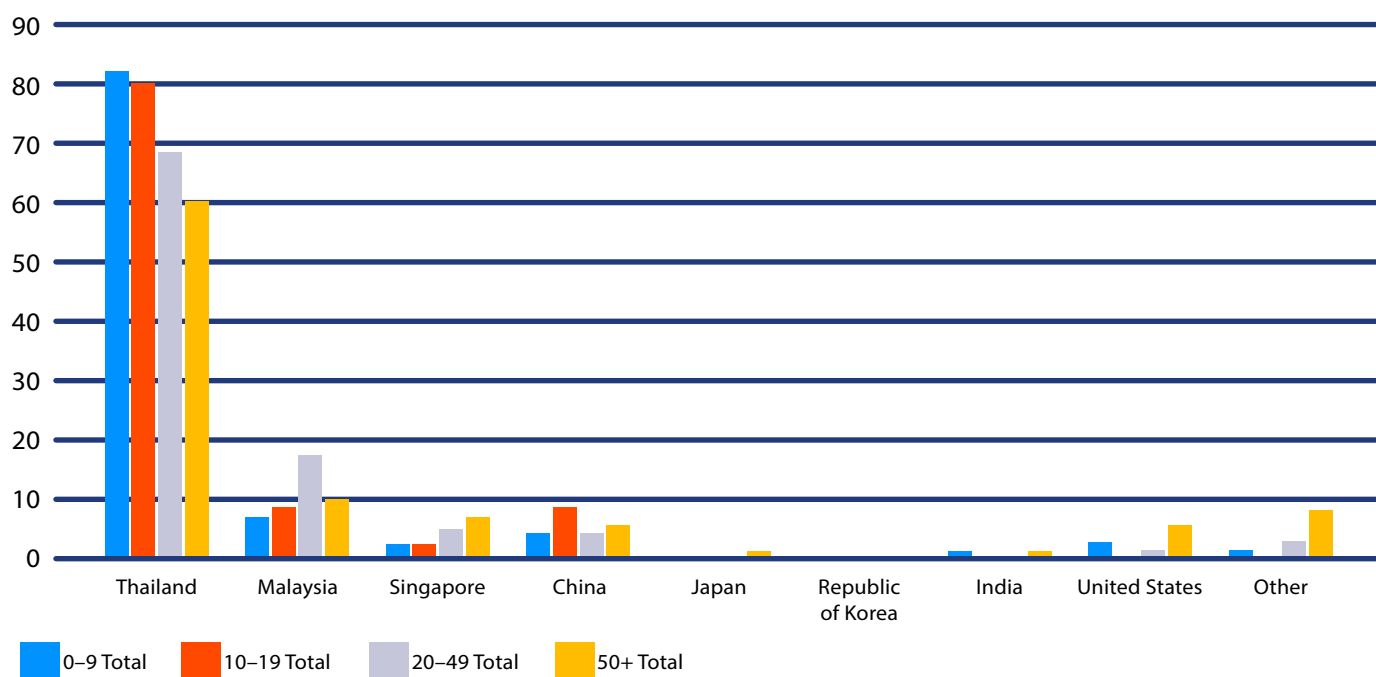
migrant children of school age in Thailand (mainly from Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar) in 2012, only 81,548 (41%) were enrolled in Thai schools. 49,677 (61%) of them were from Myanmar (UNESCAP, 2015).

Figures 9, 10 and 11 show a breakdown by age and sex of the Myanmar migrant group in each destination. Thailand hosts a much larger portion of young migrants (0–19 years old) than any other country, Malaysia a relatively larger portion of

the migrants between 20 and 49, and the United States, of migrants 50 or more years old (with women being overrepresented in this age group).

The number of children of Myanmar origin living abroad is also significant – whether they were born abroad or moved abroad at a later stage. Although some of them may be unregistered, estimates of their number do exist. The 2014 Census results shows that there are 33,775 children aged 0–4 and 59,385 children aged 5–14 abroad. Myanmar

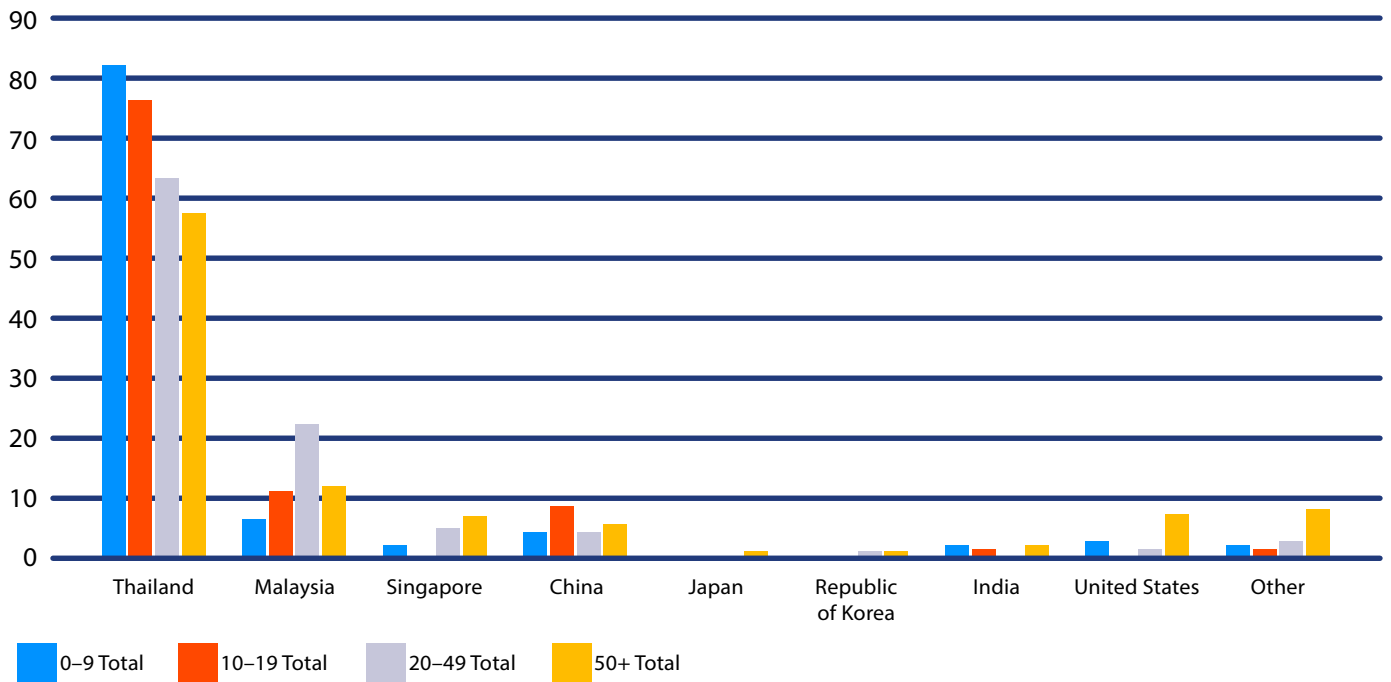
**Figure 9. Proportion of migrants by country of destination, total and age group, 2014**



Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.



**Figure 10. Proportion of migrants by country of destination, males by age group, 2014**



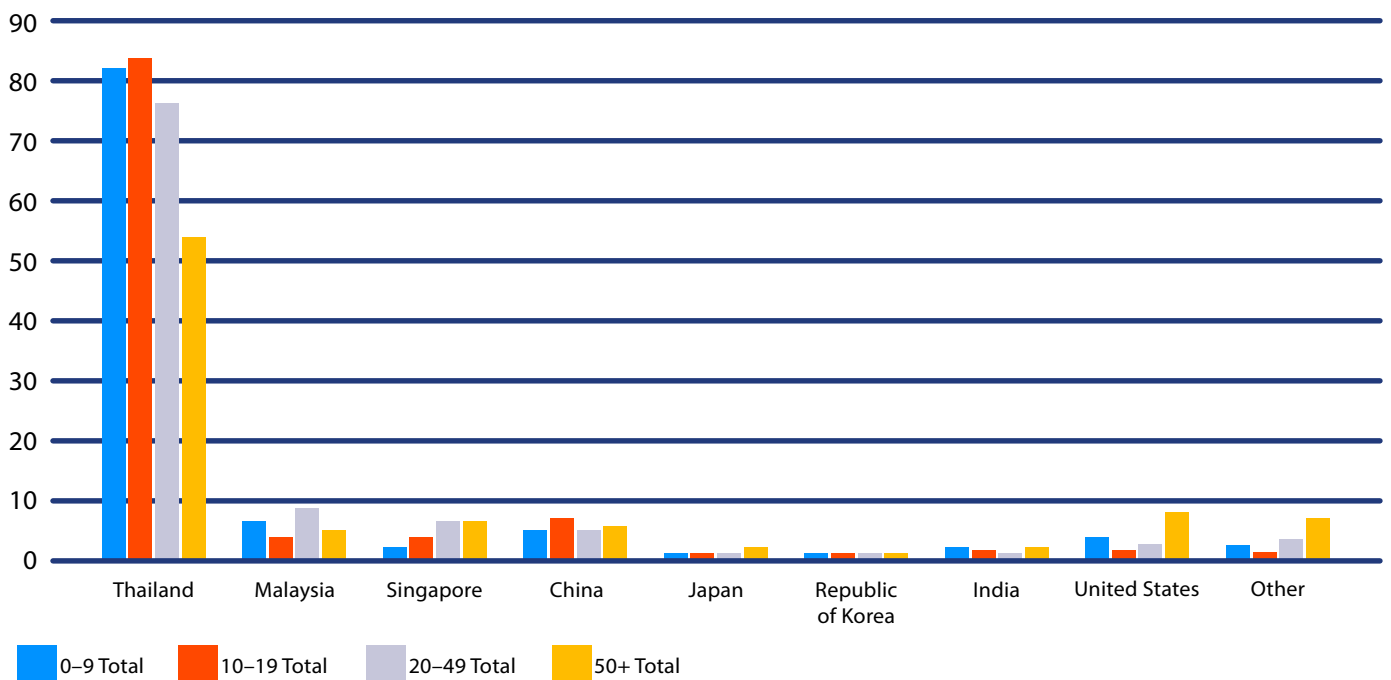
Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

international migrants aged 15 to 19 were estimated at 229,407 (GMS TRIANGLE Project, 2015).

The formal registration of unskilled Myanmar migrants in Thailand in 2004 recorded 93,082 children (Chantavanitch, 2012). Though Thailand officially recognizes the right of all children to attend school regardless of their immigration status, many of them may not actually be able to access schooling. Against an estimated 200,000

migrant children of school age in Thailand (mainly from Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar) in 2012, only 81,548 (41%) were enrolled in Thai schools. 49,677 (61%) of them were from Myanmar (UNESCAP, 2015).

**Figure 11. Proportion of migrants by country of destination, females by age group, 2014**



Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

## MIGRATION DRIVERS

A number of factors contribute to shaping Myanmar's emigration trends, including poverty, unemployment, discrimination and statelessness in areas of origin, and the desire to improve livelihoods by accessing better opportunities for employment in countries of destination (UNESCAP, 2015). Conflict, insecurity, political violence and natural disasters also represent major drivers of movement, contributing to producing complex flows of individuals motivated by a mix of economic, family, education, and survival reasons.

There are 17 major ethnic armed groups (EAGs) in Myanmar that have been engaged in a decade-long conflict with the Government, leading to protracted internal displacement and outflows of refugees and asylum seekers to neighbouring countries (South and Jolliffe, 2015). Considerable stability dividends have been experienced due to a recent ceasefire. However, Tanintharyi, Mon, Kayin, Eastern Bago, Kayah and Southern Shan in the south-eastern part of Myanmar are still affected by the conflict and related issues. Northern states of Kachin and Northern Shan have also recently experienced conflict episodes.

IDPs due to conflict and inter-communal violence in the south-east of the country amount to an estimated 400,000 people. 98,000 have been displaced by conflict in Kachin and northern Shan states since 2011 and an additional 140,000 by inter-communal violence in Rakhine state since 2012 (IDMC, 2014).

In 2014, the largest number of refugees from Myanmar (estimated at 230,000) were in Bangladesh. Other countries that were hosting large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar are Malaysia with 84,671 refugees and 7,764 asylum seekers; India with 7,671 refugees and 2,824 asylum seekers; the United States with 2,739 refugees and 41 asylum seekers; and Japan with 1,732 refugees and 640 asylum seekers (UNODC, 2014:61). In addition, in 2015, Thailand hosted 120,000 refugees, according to UNHCR estimates. Most live in camps; however, a large share lives outside camps, in particular in areas such as south of Kanchanaburi, north of Mae Hong Son, northern Chiang Mai Province, near construction sites or orchards where they work (UNHCR, 2015a). An estimated 90,000 refugees from Myanmar in Thailand have been resettled

in the United States, Australia, Canada and other countries since 2005.

Myanmar is also highly prone to natural disasters that lead to massive displacement and contribute to shaping migration flows. In 2008, cyclone Nargis affected 2.4 million people, killing 140,000 and displacing 800,000 people, of which a significant share moved from the affected Irrawady Delta into Thailand (IDMC, 2014). Cyclones again resulted in massive displacement in 2010 (100,000 IDPs) and 2013 (120,000 IDPs, many of which were people already displaced by the 2012 episodes of inter-communal violence in Northern Myanmar).

Floods also lead to frequent displacement. An estimated 38,000 people were displaced by floods in Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states and in Tanintharyi and Ayeyarwady regions in July 2013. Another 48,000 were displaced in Kayin, Mon and Shan states and Bago, Sagaing and Yangon regions during the same year in August. In September 2013, a further 22,000 were displaced by floods in Kachin, Kayin and Shan states and Ayeyarwady, Bago, Magway, Mandalay and Sagaing regions. In October and November 2013, an estimated 50,000 people were displaced in Bago region. Recurrent disasters contribute to cross-border mobility of affected persons into Thailand, Bangladesh, Malaysia and China.

Displaced persons and vulnerable migrants often resort to smuggler networks in order to cross borders. Hundreds of thousands of Myanmar migrants are smuggled each year to various destinations in South-East Asia and beyond – the majority to Thailand and Malaysia.

There are no consistently available estimates of number of victims of trafficking and smuggling because the identification of victims and their protection is not strongly pursued. The 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report notes that the Government of Myanmar is to be commended for its efforts in screening, repatriation and assistance with resettlement and reintegration of more than 1,000 victims of forced labour on fishing vessels who were in Indonesia. The report also notes that the population that remains vulnerable to trafficking include the estimated 100,000 displaced by conflict in Kachin and northern Shan states and about 120,000 persons displaced in Rakhine state (US Department of State, 2016:112).

**Table 6. Origin of Myanmar migrants by state and top destinations, 2014**

State/Region of origin	Number of migrants			Destination		
	Total (% of population)	Men	Women	First (total)	Second (total)	Third (total)
Mon state	426,586 (21%)	245,564	181,022	Thailand (385,487)	Malaysia (32,620)	Singapore (4,324)
Kayin state	322,461 (20%)	173,430	149,331	Thailand (304,980)	Malaysia (12,864)	Singapore (1,150)
Shan state	235,869 (4%)	116,054	119,815	Thailand (179,783)	China (42,490)	Malaysia (5,749)
Tanintharyi	203,232 (14%)	112,834	90,398	Thailand (187,968)	Malaysia (12,879)	Singapore (685)
Bago region	169,691 (3%)	110,367	59,324	Thailand (129,069)	Malaysia (26,564)	Singapore (6,529)
Yangon region	166,698 (2%)	109,855	56,843	Malaysia (45,593)	Singapore (33,910)	Thailand (32,791)
Rakhine state	115,502 (4%)	94,903	20,599	Thailand (74,730)	Malaysia (28,200)	China (7,833)
Magway region	84,422 (2%)	62,023	18,399	Thailand (36,674)	Malaysia (30,020)	China (11,454)
Mandalay region	80,071 (1%)	59,578	20,493	Malaysia (30,998)	Thailand (28,334)	China (8,239)
Sagaing region	64,252 (1%)	43,686	20,566	Malaysia (27,184)	India (9,012)	Thailand (7,981)
Ayeyarwady region	59,488 (1%)	42,572	16,916	Thailand (29,382)	Malaysia (16,704)	Singapore (8,021)
Chin state	51,545 (11%)	33,975	17,570	Malaysia (27,016)	United States (12,117)	India (5,880)
Kachin state	21,840 (1%)	10,163	11,317	Thailand (9,250)	China (6,137)	Malaysia (2,712)
Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory	11,928 (1%)	9,244	2,684	Thailand (6,214)	Malaysia (3,679)	-
Kayah state	8,385 (3%)	4,920	3,465	Thailand (5,601)	Malaysia (1,134)	Singapore (716)

Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

## MIGRANTS' MAIN AREAS OF ORIGIN

According to the 2014 Myanmar Census, the majority of migrants from Myanmar originate from Mon, Kayin, Thanitharyi and Shan state, as well as from the Bago region (Table 6). Geographical proximity of sending states and destination areas plays a role in determining where most of the migrants go to. Mon and Kayin states lead in sending migrants to Thailand. Most migrants to China originate from Shan state, while Sagaing is the leading state in sending migrants to India. Chin state sends more migrants to the United States than any other state or region. Most of the Myanmar migrants in Thailand and Malaysia originate from Mon state. Migrants to Singapore almost exclusively come from the Yangon region

(33,910). Shan (51%) and Kachin (53%) send out more women than men – mostly to Thailand, China and Malaysia. They also are the only two states with China as the second most common destination. Magway, Mandalay and Rakhine however send more migrants to China. In most of the sending states, an overwhelming proportion of migrants moves to the first destination country. Of the migrants from Kayin, Tanintharyi and Mon states, for instance, respectively 95 and 90 per cent go to Thailand. Migrants from Yangon, however, were evenly distributed among the three leading destinations.

Tables 7 and 8 show the distribution of male and female migrants from Myanmar by country of destination. The gender-disaggregated numbers largely mirror the general pattern of migrant distribution in the countries of destination by state

**Table 7. Male Myanmar migrants by state of origin and country of destination, 2014**

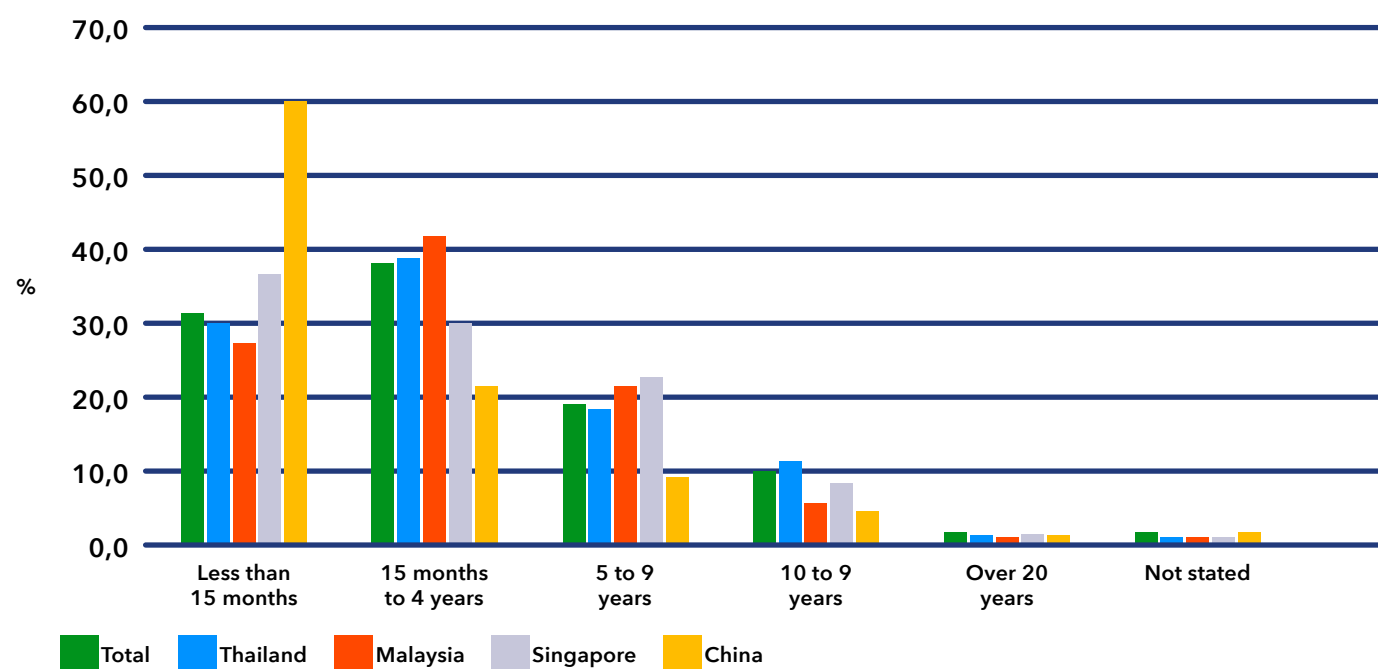
Destination	Thailand	Malaysia	Singapore	China	Japan	Republic of Korea	India	United States	Other	Total
Kachin	4,501	1,580	344	2,623	102	51	127	467	368	10,163
Kayah	3,265	883	242	34	18	57	9	249	163	4,920
Kayin	160,935	9,764	553	29	34	159	39	1,193	724	173,430
Chin	436	19,751	168	183	24	56	3,502	7,636	2,219	33,975
Sagaing	5,230	22,043	2,070	4,280	137	662	5,119	2,794	1,351	43,686
Thanitharyi	101,351	9,986	408	52	92	143	34	301	467	112,834
Bago	80,243	21,673	2,910	1,704	189	1,403	111	415	1,719	110,367
Magway	26,511	27,147	1,906	8,118	83	997	89	267	905	66,023
Mandalay	17,802	28,157	3,376	5,487	253	1,845	215	544	1,899	59,578
Mon	214,432	25,109	3,236	196	107	838	48	573	1,025	245,564
Rakhine	60,086	24,707	858	6,634	92	355	303	565	1,303	94,903
Yangon	21,186	34,086	18,989	3,709	2,845	6,611	653	6,095	15,681	109,855
Shan	90,251	3,464	1,135	18,869	157	162	103	450	1,463	116,054
Ayeyarwady	21,962	14,136	2,485	919	138	654	518	329	1,431	42,572
Nay Pyi Taw	4,607	3,286	398	289	43	125	47	59	39	8,893
Total	812,798	245,772	39,078	53,126	4,314	14,118	10,917	21,937	30,757	1,232,817

Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

of origin, with a few notable exceptions. Six states account for over 70 per cent of the male migrants: migrants from Kayin, Thanintharyi, Bago, Mon and Shan mostly go to Thailand, migrants from Yangon to Malaysia. The six most significant states and regions of origin of migrant women are Kayin, Thanintharyi, Bago, Mon, Yangon and Shan – in all cases migrants are directed to Thailand. Shan

and Kachin states send more female than male migrants to China.

**Figure 12. Length of stay by country of destination, 2014**



Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

**Table 8. Female Myanmar migrants by state of origin and country of destination, 2014**

Destination	Thailand	Malaysia	Singapore	China	Japan	Republic of Korea	India	United States	Other	Total
Kachin	4,749	1,132	929	3,514	120	10	73	449	341	11,317
Kayah	2,336	251	474	21	18	4	8	165	188	3,465
Kayin	144,045	3,100	597	28	22	8	5	904	622	149,331
Chin	152	7,265	1,527	19	20	19	2,378	4,481	1,709	17,570
Sagaing	2,751	5,141	4,273	1,743	99	24	3,893	1,848	794	20,566
Thanitharyi	86,617	2,893	277	27	70	13	6	236	259	90,398
Bago	48,826	4,891	3,682	513	117	22	37	284	952	59,324
Magway	10,163	2,873	1,454	3,336	70	19	37	81	366	18,399
Mandalay	10,532	2,841	2,283	2,752	257	27	126	461	1,214	20,493
Mon	171,055	7,511	1,106	209	82	24	5	384	646	181,022
Rakhine	14,284	3,573	940	1,199	29	7	42	149	376	20,599
Yangon	11,605	11,507	14,921	1,680	1,982	226	342	5,484	9,096	56,843
Shan	89,532	2,285	2,289	23,621	255	36	53	466	1,278	119,815
Ayeyarwady	7,420	2,568	5,536	368	97	17	39	198	673	16,916
Nay Pyi Taw	1,607	393	293	107	45	18	14	50	157	2,684
Total	605,674	58,224	40,581	39,137	3,283	474	7,058	15,640	18,671	788,742

Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

## LENGTH OF STAY

According to the 2014 Census data, and as shown in Figure 12, 31 per cent of the migrants from Myanmar have been residing abroad for less than 15 months, 37 per cent for 15 months to 4 years, 20 per cent for 5 to 9 years, 10 per cent for 10 to 19 years and just about 1 per cent for over 20 years. The data appears to show Myanmar migrants as being mostly recent migrants. This is particularly the case for specific destinations (such as China) in which the overwhelming majority is comprised of recent migrants (about 60%). However, there are higher percentages of migrants who have stayed longer than 5 years among migrants residing in the United States, Japan and India. The patterns are likely betraying the reality of frequent returns to Myanmar either as part of their planned visits or deportations with only those with regular documentation staying longer at their destinations.



# MAIN CRISES AFFECTING MIGRANTS ABROAD

## MIGRANTS' VULNERABILITY IN THEIR DESTINATION

The considerable risks migrants face along their migration routes in South-East Asia were brought into sharp international attention between 2014 and 2015, when thousands of migrants from various countries were stranded in the high seas of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. Irregular maritime departures have continued over many years from impoverished or conflict-affected areas in Myanmar (e.g. Buthidaung, Maungdaw, Sittwe and Sin Tet Maw). Some of the migrants travel to St Martin Island in Bangladesh, from where they board cargo ships to Malaysia (UNHCR, 2013).

In addition, migrants also face a variety of natural and man-made hazards that can result in crisis situations in their countries of destination. Their vulnerability in the face of these events is likely to be compounded by the circumstances of their migration experience, with regular, documented migrants more likely to use formal, safer migration routes and modes of travel, and have access to basic services, resources and assistance in areas of destination. However, all migrant groups can present specific conditions of vulnerability that may translate into increased impacts in the face of crises of all kinds.

Linguistic barriers and the unfamiliarity of the environment in the areas of destination are also major obstacles for Myanmar migrants' safety and security in their host countries. As a consequence, migrants' reliance on brokers and mediator is heightened, which can increase their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. This underlines the importance of pre-departure training and orientation programmes for migrants and ethical recruitment practices.

Some of the challenges that migrants face which were cited were lack of access to basic labour rights, lack of access to assistance while abroad,

labour exploitation and trafficking. In addition, they also face challenges finding accommodation and appropriate employment due to insufficient skills, qualifications and language proficiency, and accessing health services and education. They also face difficulties in communicating with individuals and institutions in their host communities due to language barriers, as well as communicating with Myanmar embassies or consulates and NGOs when seeking assistance.

A recurrent challenge that was cited is that they also face frequent arrest and have little or no legal protection in their host countries, even in situations in which they are waiting for their work permits. Unfamiliarity with the places of their destination was also cited as a challenge. In addition, migrants' documents are often confiscated by smugglers. In some areas, employers may also confiscate documents as a mean to control migrants they are employing.

## MYANMAR MIGRANTS' "HOTSPOT" DESTINATIONS

The main destination countries for Myanmar migrants (in particular other countries in the GMS and ASEAN regions) are exposed to a variety of hazards, summarized in Table 9.

The following sections take a close look at some of the leading destination countries for migrants from Myanmar, focusing on some of the crises that could affect them. Emphasis is particularly on Asian destinations that absorb an overwhelming share of the migration flows from the country – and for which an unparalleled wealth of data exists. The study also covers potential crises affecting migrants in other destinations, including Europe, North America, Oceania and the Middle East.

**Table 9. Risk factors and migrant vulnerability in major countries of destination**

Potential crisis	Causes/effects
<b>Natural hazard</b>	Earthquakes, cyclones, floods, landslides, droughts, tsunamis, volcanoes and fires resulting in destruction of infrastructure, displacement, loss of livelihood and economic loss, hunger, injury and death.
<b>Economic crisis</b>	Global economic crisis, Asian economic crisis, poor economic conditions in host or sending country, structural economic problems, underinvestment, underdevelopment.
<b>Industrial/Occupational accident</b>	Poor regulation in factories, industrial standards enforcement, poor safety and environmental standards have led to industrial accidents and fires. Particularly significant for migrants working risky jobs.
<b>Exploitation</b>	Enslavement, forced labour, debt bondage, trafficking, restricted movement, rape, physical injury, death; relying on smugglers, brokers and traffickers or emigrating via sea and border crossing through jungle is highly risky.
<b>Disease outbreak</b>	Outbreak of pandemic such as influenza, lack of access to health care, dangerous and risky jobs.
<b>Mass return/Deportation</b>	Irregular and undocumented immigrants face arrest and deportation at all times.
<b>Conflict and violence</b>	Internal Myanmar conflict/long-standing conflict inside Pakistan pitting Shia and Shiite Muslims, border conflict with India over Kashmir, historical tensions with Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Thailand conflict is largely severe in the southern region fanned by separatist movements. Other parts of the country are also targeted with terrorist attacks.

Source: Own elaboration.

## Thailand

The first attempts to regulate migration and register migrants in Thailand are over two decades old. The first formal registration process from Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia was established in 1996. It established quotas for migrants from the region and resulted in the registration of 293,652 migrant workers, 80 per cent from Myanmar (Chantavanich and Vungisiriphisal, 2012:4). In 2001, in an attempt to register an unlimited number of migrant workers, the Government of Thailand announced an amnesty policy including those who were self-employed without imposing quotas. This was followed by the signing of memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Governments of Thailand and Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia and Myanmar between 2002 and 2003, in an effort to secure cooperation in resolving issues around the employment of migrants from these countries. The registration policy reflected in the MoUs was later revised and expanded to regularize unskilled workers in irregular situations. It therefore covered the registration of migrant workers and their families, verification of their nationalities, and formal recruitment of migrant workers. This exercise, as reported in Chantavanich and Vungisiriphisal (2012:5), has been hugely successful with a total of 1,284,920 unskilled migrant workers and 93,082 children aged 0–15 registered in 2004 well before the start of the formal verification process for Myanmar nationals.

In the case of Myanmar, the formal recruitment and nationality verification only started in 2009. By 2012, a total of 1,186,805 migrants from Myanmar had been registered in Thailand.

The Bangkok metropolitan area hosts 42 per cent of the Myanmar migrants with work permits in Thailand, as shown in Table VII Annex A. The southern region hosts 25 per cent, the central region 17 per cent and the northern region 14 per cent. The north-eastern region has the lowest proportion of Myanmar migrants with work permit at 1 per cent. Bangkok, Bangkok vicinity and southern regions account for almost two thirds of documented migrants from Myanmar residing in Thailand. A study that looked at the exposure to hazards and vulnerability of migrants in Thailand (Beesey, Limsakul and McDougall, 2015) estimated documented migrants from Myanmar to be over 1 million. This suggests a very high level of undocumented migrants from Myanmar when this figure is compared with the 2.3 million Myanmar migrants in Thailand estimated by IOM (2013).

Along the Myanmar border with Thailand, the Tachileik, Myawaddy and Kawthoung checkpoints process high number of migrants. Myanmar migrants are particularly concentrated in industries located along border areas, such as in Thailand's Mae Sot, Surat Thani, Tak and Ranong provinces.

As shown in Figures 13 and 14, most migrants from Myanmar work in fishing, factories, agriculture, construction, domestic services, small-scale

trading of food and drinks, and the tourism sector (Chantavanich and Vungisiriphisal, 2012).

Thailand’s rapidly expanding export-oriented economy is increasingly reliant on migrant labour, with majority of foreign workers being from Myanmar. The ongoing economic integration of the ASEAN is expected to lead to an estimated shortage of 5.36 million workers in the Thailand economy by 2025 and widen further over subsequent years unless migrant labour is used to meet the demand (Chantavanich and Vungisiriphisal, 2012). Some sectors in Thailand’s economy, such as fisheries, agriculture and hospitality, are more reliant on migrant labour than others. These sectors tend to offer lower wages and poorer working conditions and hence attract a higher proportion of undocumented workers especially from Myanmar.

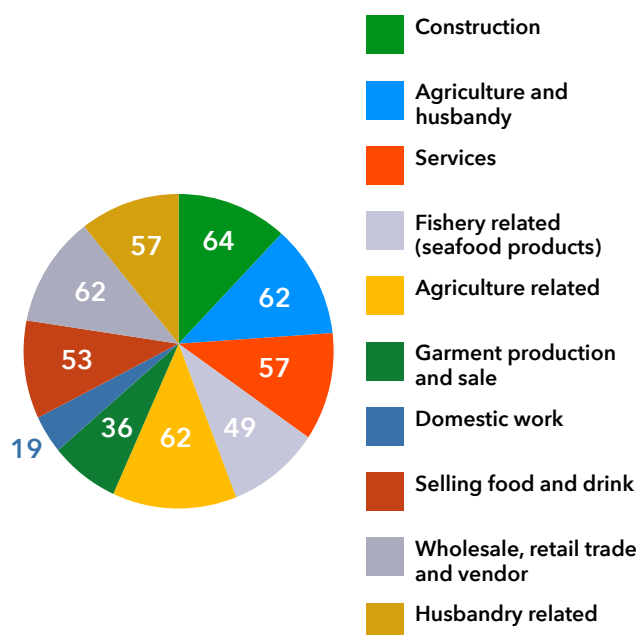
Figures 15, 16 and 17 show the areas with the highest concentration of Myanmar migrants and provide details about their presence: Bangkok (101,489 people), Samutsakorn (73,225), Tak (35,635), Samutprakan (28,128), Ranong (22,988), Pathum Thani (22,591), Surat Thani (21,228), Songkhla (19,306), Phuket (19,235) and Chon Buri (18,425) stand out.

Many migrants from Myanmar live in areas that are subject to natural hazards. Floods are frequent, especially in Thailand’s southern, northern and north-eastern region, as well as in the central region including the basin of the Praya River and Greater

Bangkok. Greater Bangkok experiences flooding by the Chao Phraya River and its tributaries (Tha Chin, Mae Klong and Bang Pa Klong) (Beesey Limsakul and McDougall, 2016). The devastating effects of flooding on livelihoods were demonstrated in 2011 when, after a period of heavy rainfalls on the city area and in the northern part of the watershed, Greater Bangkok was inundated. The floods affected 13.6 million people, 65 provinces and over 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> of farmland. The World Bank estimates of the economic losses that resulted was USD 45.7 billion (ibid.:21). To the south of the Bay of Bangkok is the Gulf of Thailand, which boasts many tourist resorts due to its pristine ecosystems. Thousands of Myanmar migrants work in the resorts in Phuket and Krabi to the east and Koh Tao, Koh Phangan and Koh Samui to the west. These resort areas were the hardest hit by the 2004 Asian tsunami, and thousands of Myanmar nationals were among those affected. Droughts occur in the north-east region while storms, landslides and forest fires occur in the southern and northern region. The country’s north and western part are seismically active, and its western coasts are prone to tsunamis triggered in the Indian Ocean.

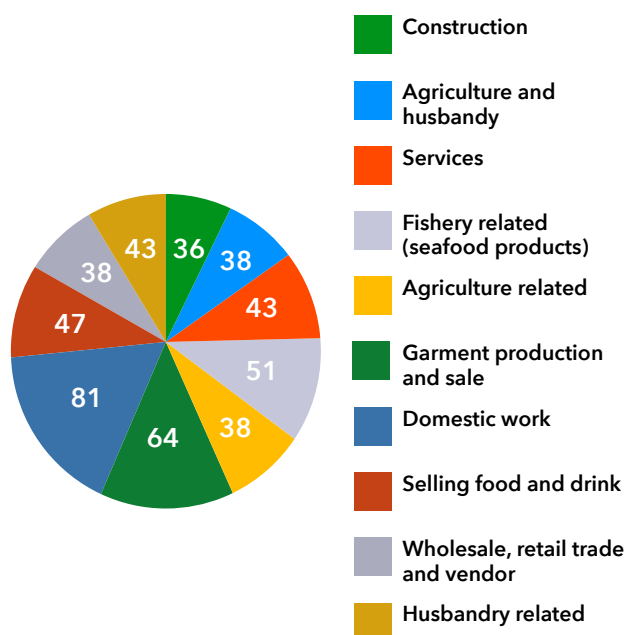
Thailand’s disaster management system is based on the 2007 Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Act as well as on Five-Year National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plans. The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), in the Interior Ministry, is tasked with prevention and mitigation,

**Figure 13. Occupations of male migrants from Myanmar in Thailand, in thousands**



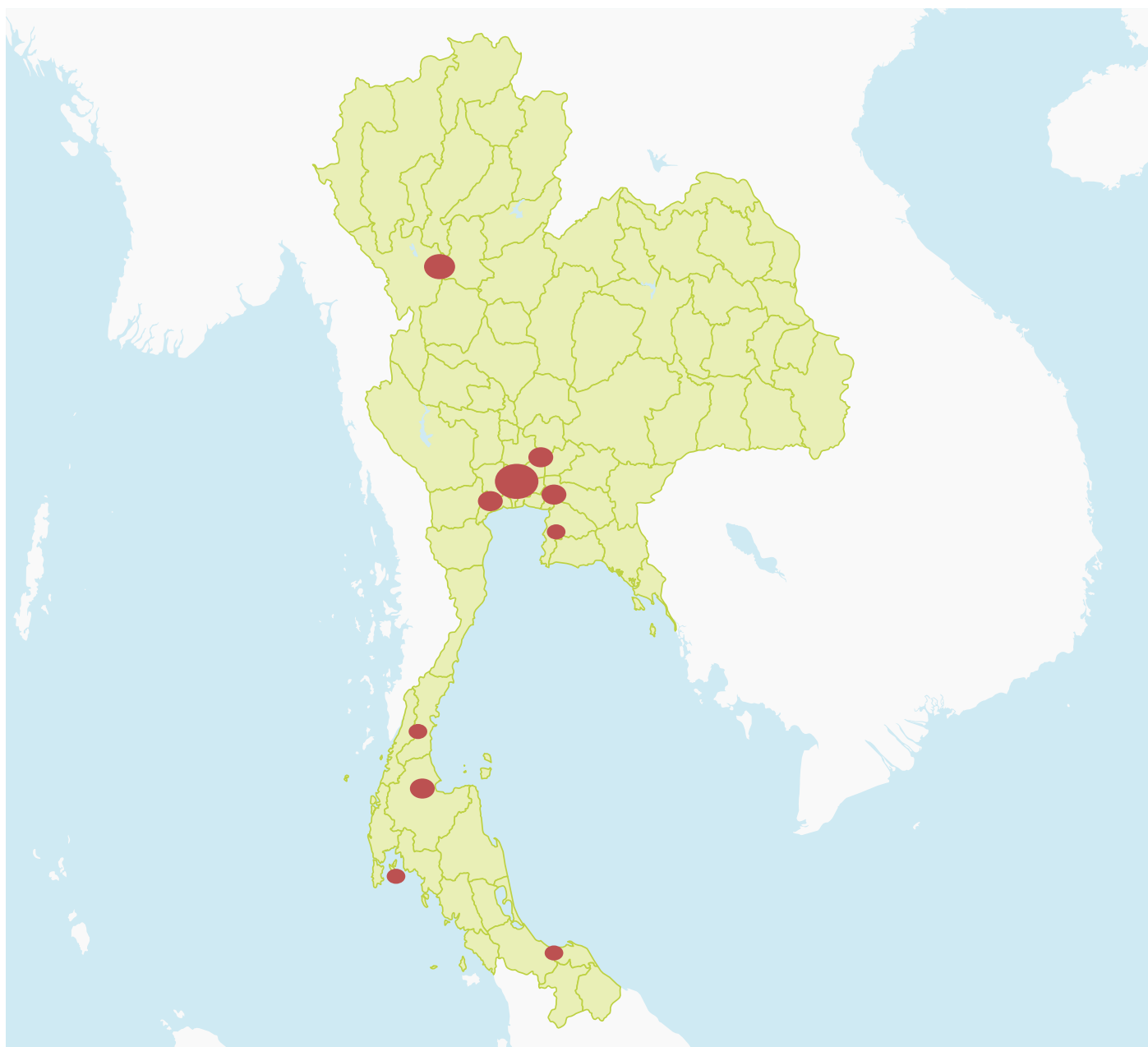
Source: Chantavanich and Vungisiriphisal, 2012.

**Figure 14. Occupations of female migrants from Myanmar in Thailand, in thousands**



Source: Chantavanich and Vungisiriphisal, 2012.

Figure 15. Map of Thailand showing main areas with Myanmar migrants



Source: Own elaboration.

preparedness, response and recovery from all forms of disasters in Thailand. Thailand is part of a group of 17 countries committed to regional cooperation to build resilience to such disasters (DDPM, 2015).

Thailand also participated in the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction's campaign on "one million safe schools and hospitals", while the Ministry of Education has developed curricula for the management of the risk of disasters associated with events, such as flash floods, landslides and tsunami (DDPM, 2015). Thailand reported progress against the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) through its National Progress Report, where some obstacles to risk reduction policies were highlighted, including governance, mitigation programmes, lack of resources at various administrative levels

and limited risk awareness.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the report states that minority groups have been included into risk reduction planning since Cabinet approved the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan in 2009. It suggests that Provincial Disaster Management Plans take vulnerable groups into account, and the community-based approaches include minorities in community-level planning. However, little detail is given on how this inclusion actually takes place (DDPM, 2015). The Thai emergency management actors set up ad hoc forms of support for migrant workers on occasion

<sup>6</sup> This is not unlike criticism directed at the SNAP in 2011 by the United Nations Development Programme; "this strategy being very recent has not been made familiar within the government institutions".

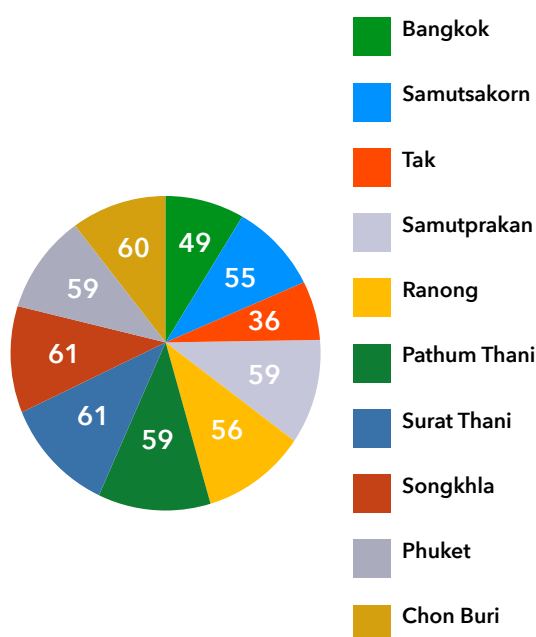
of the 2011 floods, including dedicated emergency shelters, access to relief assistance remained reportedly challenging for many of them, mainly due to the following:

- Insufficient overall assistance;
- Insufficient consideration of the migrants' cultural specificities within disaster management planning on the part of the Thai authorities;
- Administrative obstacles to accessing services and moving freely within the country; and
- Discrimination and abuse by individual relief workers and members of various security forces (Beesey, Limsakul and McDougall, 2016).

To date, Thailand's procedures for disaster management seem to include more effectively tourists than migrant workers, in particular undocumented ones.

In 2015, Thailand signed the HFA's successor framework, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. The DDPM is setting up a task force that includes public health, finance and environment to develop and monitor progress against the Sendai Framework. Targets include substantial reductions in mortality, reducing the number of people affected by disasters, reducing damage to critical infrastructure and increasing access to early warning systems and disaster risk information (ibid.:50).

**Figure 16. Main locations of male migrants from Myanmar in Thailand, in thousands**



Source: Chantavanich and Vungisiriphal, 2012.

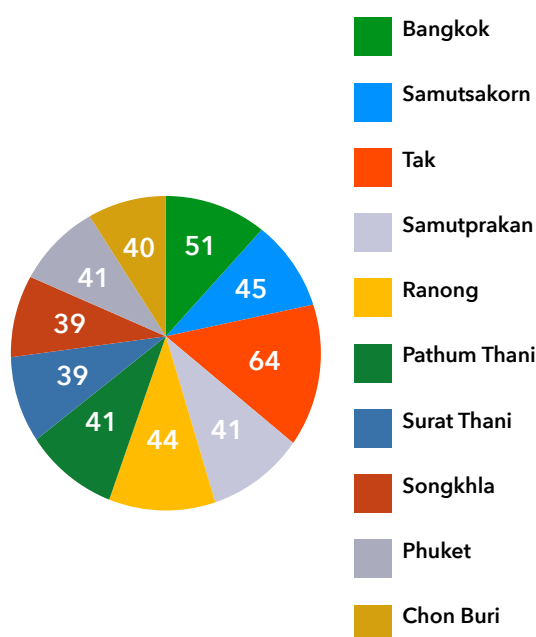
The 1997 Asian economic crisis affected the Thailand economy, resulting in large numbers of migrant workers returning to Myanmar.

Thailand's southern provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, on the border to Malaysia, a vicious separatist civil war has been raging and is reported to have claimed 5,000 lives since the violence broke out in 2004.<sup>7</sup> The war is waged by Muslim separatist groups seeking greater autonomy from Thailand. The attacks are carried out by car bombs, machine gun attacks on police stations, public buildings and stores and beheadings of people thought to be sympathetic to the Government of Thailand. These provinces in the south where the attacks occur are not far from Phuket and other tourist destinations that attract Myanmar migrant workers.

Rising wages, increasing regulation of labour recruitment and practices, and instability in the south create potential for higher demand for migrant workers who are willing to accept slightly lower-paying jobs and precarious working conditions that are likely to be turned down by Thailand nationals. At the same time, they pose a degree of uncertainty in prospects for work if migrants find it difficult to acquire required permits or travel to areas where there are work opportunities.

<sup>7</sup> [www.dw.com/en/thailands-sectarian-war-rages-outside-public-eye/a-16526013](http://www.dw.com/en/thailands-sectarian-war-rages-outside-public-eye/a-16526013)

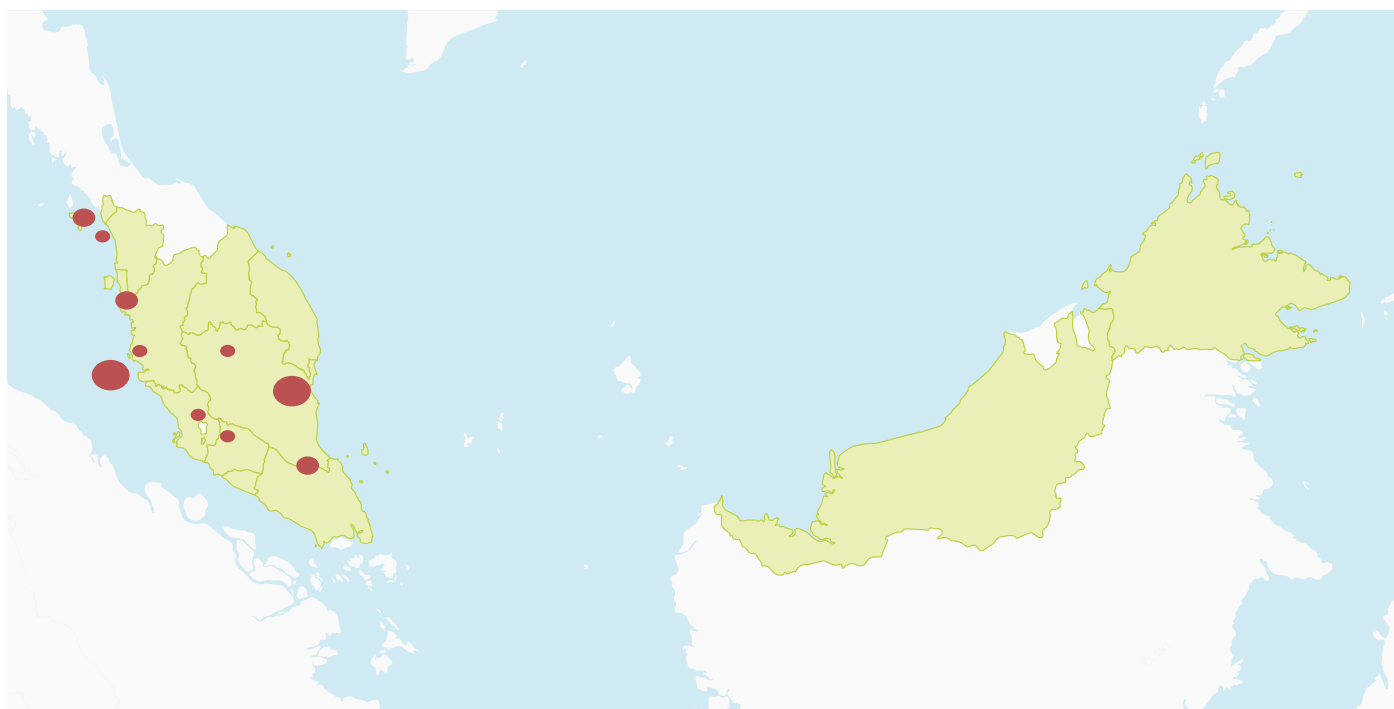
**Figure 17. Main locations of female migrants from Myanmar in Thailand, in thousands**



Source: Chantavanich and Vungisiriphal, 2012.



**Figure 18. Map of Malaysia showing main areas with Myanmar migrants**



Source: Own elaboration.

As discussed above, the conflict in south-east Myanmar has led to thousands of refugees fleeing to Thailand who have either moved into refugee camps or settled in host areas outside of official refugee camps. The complexity of the conflict behind this outflow of refugees means that to varying extents, most of them still rely on EAGs dominant in their areas of origin for various forms of assistance and decision-making. As such, it is difficult to ignore the role of the EAGs together with Thailand-based government agencies, NGOs and community-based organizations in assisting the Myanmar refugees in crisis. Some of the EAGs have in fact established humanitarian branches aimed at supporting persons in crisis in areas under their influence inside Myanmar and in Thailand (South and Jolliffe, 2015:31).<sup>8</sup>

## Malaysia

Malaysia is exposed to numerous natural hazards including floods, forest fires, tsunami, cyclonic storms, landslides, epidemics and haze. Most Myanmar migrants to Malaysia are destined to Kuala Lumpur, Selangor states and Penang in the north.

<sup>8</sup> Such organizations – such as the Karen Refugee Committee, which is the humanitarian arm of the Karen National Union EAG in Karen state and the Karreni Refugee Committee, the humanitarian arm of the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) – are already involved in consulting refugees in Thailand on potential for them to return to Myanmar following the current ceasefire.

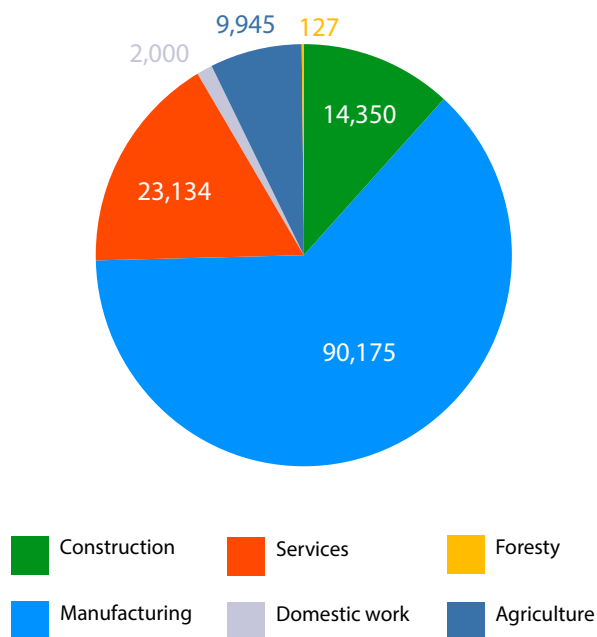
There are estimates that suggest that about 700,000 Myanmar migrant workers are in Malaysia, with only about 330,000 of them having work permits (Kyi, 2015). These estimates suggest a steep increase in the numbers from earlier estimates of 500,000 registered and unregistered migrant workers from Myanmar in 2009, 65 per cent of which worked in the manufacturing sector, as shown in Figure 19 (IRIN, 2009). In addition, UNHCR has registered 143,048 persons of concern from Myanmar in the country (UNHCR, 2015b).

Figure 18 shows the major areas where Myanmar migrants live in Malaysia. UNHCR also recorded persons of concern in Kuala Lumpur (30,000 to 40,000), Selangor (45,339), Sabah (4), Johor (8,191), Penang (9,875), Sarawak (2), Perlis (131), Kedah (4,680), Perak (3,980), Negeri Sembilan (2,674), Melaka (937), Kelantan (1,569), Terengganu (1,814) and Pahang (4,517) (UNHCR, 2015b:1).

Many migrants from Myanmar travel by boat across the Andaman Sea, land in Thailand and proceed overland to Malaysia. Many die at sea from starvation, beatings by boat crews and dehydration (UNESCAP, 2015). Almost all rely on smugglers to make the journey, and often fall victims of violence and abuse. In early 2015, holding pens for migrants pending payment of extortion money by their relatives were discovered in Thailand and Malaysia (ibid.:28). Another common form of exploitation of migrants from Myanmar in Malaysia is debt bondage,



**Figure 19. Registered Myanmar workers in Malaysia, 2009**



Source: Chantavanich and Vungisiriphisal, 2012.

practiced by networks of informal brokers operating at village level in most of Myanmar who are linked to smugglers and traffickers at borders (Hall, 2012a:4). The exploitation of migrants sometimes results in tragedy: in 2015, the Malaysian national police discovered numerous gravesites and abandoned camps in the mountainous jungle of northern Malaysia, along the Thailand border, and exhumed the remains of 150 people who were believed to be Muslim from Rakhine state and migrants from Bangladesh (UN-ACT, 2015).

The risk of detention and deportation for irregular migrants is high, especially because Malaysia has not included irregular migrants in the ASEAN agreement on assistance to migrants. Muslim migrants from Rakhine state, refugees and unregistered migrants are therefore not able to send children to school or hold jobs legally (Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DMHA), 2016). This creates a situation whereby they are forced to accept low wages and poor working conditions, thereby heightening their vulnerability to workplace exploitation and abuse, including wage denial. The status of children denied education perpetuates poverty and vulnerability across generations. Higher levels of vulnerability to everyday shocks means that in times of crises, such migrants are likely to be among the more severely affected.

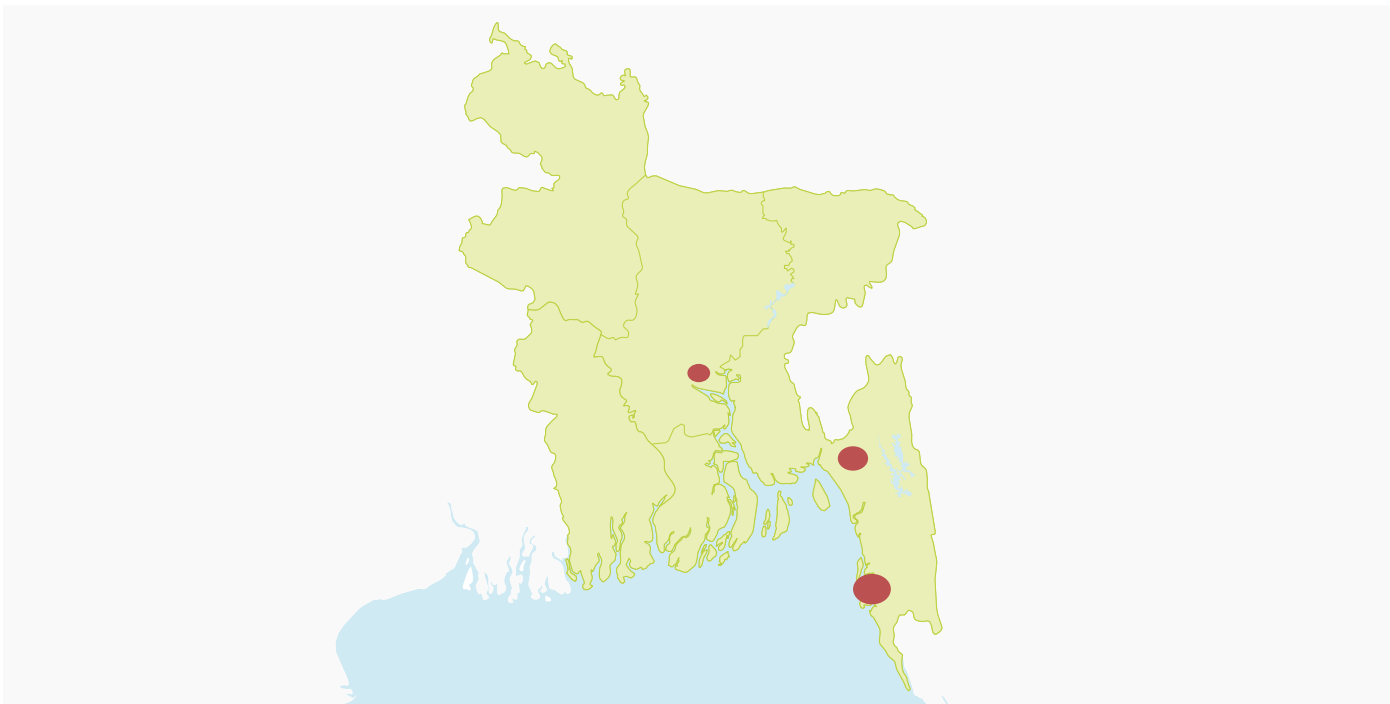
A large number of migrants find themselves in irregular circumstances in their host countries. Some enter their host country without formal documentation, some overstay their permits or visa and lapse into illegality – including due to brokers demanding high fees to return home or confiscating documents. Migrants in these circumstances have heightened vulnerability to shocks brought by hazards as they may be unable to access help from authorities due to fear of arrest and deportation. In the case of mass return migration to Myanmar following clashes with local residents in Malaysia, the private sector in Myanmar was reported to have sponsored return flights for some of the Myanmar workers. The bitter conflict between Muslims and Buddhists in Rakhine state appears to have spilled over among migrants in Malaysia with an estimated 20 murders of mainly Buddhist factory workers reported in Malaysia by September 2014. In a country with an estimated 1.5 million Myanmar migrants, the potential for the sectarian violence to spread is real.

The 2016 CFE-DMHA report on Malaysia highlights that the main vulnerable groups that are vulnerable in Malaysia include refugees, unregistered migrants, IDPs and trafficked persons (ibid.:17). The majority of refugees and unregistered migrants are Muslims from Myanmar, whose status in Malaysia prevents them from holding jobs or sending their children to schools. Because of their tenuous status, they often live in poor, congested housing conditions on the edge of Kuala Lumpur (ibid.:18).

The main natural hazard affecting Malaysia and impacting vulnerable populations such as migrants is flooding. Floods during 2014 north-east (October to February) monsoon affected over half a million people and caused infrastructural damage of USD 670 million (ibid.:22). Floods mainly affect the western part of Malaysia. Other hazards affecting the country are droughts and landslides, which affect the eastern part of the country. Landslides occur in the form of slope failures along highways and roads in urban and rural areas. Landslides have caused at least 611 fatalities between 1900 and 2009 in Perak, Senah, Selanghor, Pahang, Sabah, Pahng, Kuala Lumpur, Johor and Sarawak, even though many events might have gone unrecorded (ibid.:23).

Other hazards that affect Malaysia include cyclones, earthquakes and forest fires. Malaysia was also affected by the 2004 Asian tsunami that led to 72 fatalities, with most of the impact being felt in Penang (ibid.:26).

**Figure 20. Map of Bangladesh showing main areas with Myanmar migrants**



Source: Own elaboration.

Malaysia's National Security Council has the official mandate to coordinate disaster management in the country, in accordance with Directive No. 20 on "Policy and Mechanism on National Disaster Relief and Management". The Council enables the implementation of activities by the Disaster Management and Relief Committees, multi-agency institutions working at federal, state and local levels (ibid.:12). The Council is soon going to be succeeded by a new National Disaster Management Agency to be established under the Office of the Prime Minister.

Other key disaster management organizations in Malaysia include the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, the National Disaster Relief Fund (Kumpulan Wang Amanah Bantuan Bencana Negara), the Malaysian Meteorological Society, the Department of Drainage and Irrigation, the Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team, and the Malaysia Social Welfare Department.

International organizations are also involved in disaster response in Malaysia, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, UNHCR, World Health Organization (WHO) and IOM. Most national and international agencies involved in disaster response benefit from funding from various bilateral and multilateral international donor organizations (ibid.).

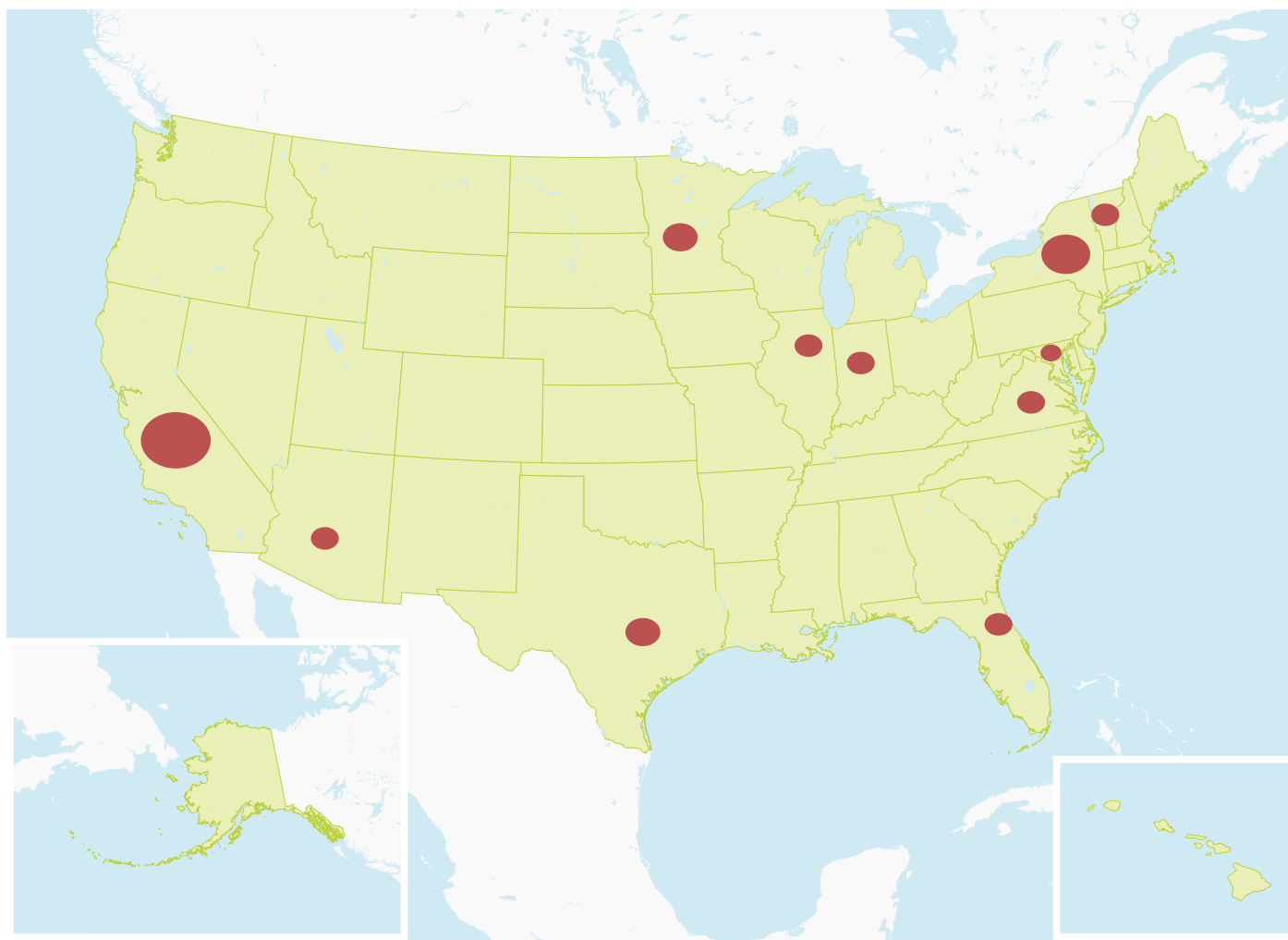
In addition, a community-based disaster response system is in place to disseminate information and raise community awareness on disasters. It is led by district officers and senior district police officers. Other actors at district level include the District Fire and Rescue Department Officer and representatives of other government arms.

Migrants also mobilize social capital and rely on civil society organizations in order to overcome challenges and hardship, including in times of crisis. Kyi (2015) found out that approximately 70 organizations operate in support of Myanmar migrants in Selangor state and Kuala Lumpur. Buddhist monasteries are the first places in which Myanmar migrants seek support and refuge. Formal organizations such as the Burma Refugee Organization often require membership fees before assisting migrants facing hardship, hence, more loosely formed social welfare organizations fill broader assistance roles for the majority of migrants, including for funeral assistance, blood donation and health care.

### **Bangladesh**

Migrants from Myanmar in Bangladesh are estimated to be 290,000 (IOM, 2008). Other estimates put these figures somewhere between 200,000 and 400,000 (UNESCAP, 2015). The differing figures point to the lack of reliable estimates because of the high number of unregistered migrants. Most

**Figure 21. Map of the United States of America showing main areas with Myanmar migrants**



Source: Own elaboration.

of the migrants from Myanmar in Bangladesh are refugees, and in particular Muslims from Rakhine state. They have crossed into Bangladesh over the past two decades and settled mainly in the areas bordering Myanmar, in the south-east of the country. Most of the refugees from Rakhine state are located in the Cox's Bazaar district and in other refugee camps. In Cox's Bazaar, the estimates (UN DESA, 2013) are of 230,734 refugees from Myanmar, with an estimated 200,000 unregistered migrants residing outside the camps. In Chittagong, there are an estimated 100,000 migrants from Myanmar. Other places where migrants from Myanmar reside in Bangladesh are Teknaf and Dhakar.

Bangladesh is prone to frequent disasters, including floods, cyclones, tornadoes, drought and landslides.

The lead government agency in disaster management in Bangladesh is the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, whose mandate is anchored on the National Plan for Disaster Management (NPDM, 2010–2015) and the Disaster Management Act (2012) (Ahmed et al., 2015).

### United States of America

There is a large number of Myanmar migrants who have settled in the United States, mostly through third-country resettlement programmes arranged by UNHCR and IOM. Figure 21 shows the main areas in the United States where migrants from Myanmar have settled, which include major metropolitan areas of San Francisco–Oakland–Hayward (10,000); Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim (9,000); New York–Newark–New Jersey (8,000); Minneapolis–St Paul, Minnesota (5,000); Indianapolis (4,000); Fort Wayne, Indiana (3,000); Washington–Arlington–Alexandria (3,000); Atlanta–Sandy Springs–Roswell, Georgia (3,000); Chicago–Naperville–Elgin, Illinois (3,000); Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington, Texas (3,000); Buffalo–Niagara Falls (2,000); and Phoenix–Scottsdale–Mesa, Arizona (2,000).

Large movements of Myanmar nationals to the United States began in 2004, with the resettlement of 1,400 refugees (Olson, Stauffer and Barnett, 2016). Table 10 shows that between 2005 and 2009, a total of 26,670 Myanmar nationals were

**Table 10. Myanmar refugees resettled in the United States between 2005 and 2009**

Fiscal year refugee arrivals from Myanmar (Top 10 states)						
State	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Arizona	67	63	381	542	900	1,953
California	93	36	424	519	450	1,522
Georgia	16	23	401	574	875	1,889
Illinois	20	31	434	639	596	1,720
Indiana	185	193	1,066	1,150	1,147	3,741
Minnesota	157	121	488	367	370	1,503
New York	251	217	1,100	1,321	1,696	4,585
North Carolina	86	57	544	837	885	2,409
Texas	163	155	1,163	1,457	3,086	6,024
Washington	15	13	181	460	655	1,324
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,053</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>6,182</b>	<b>7,866</b>	<b>10,660</b>	<b>26,670</b>

Source: Administration of Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement 2005–2009.

resettled in the country, most of them in Texas, Indiana and New York states.

A variety of man-made and natural hazards affect the various areas in which Myanmar migrants live and work. Records by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) show Texas and California are the states most prone to disasters in the country. The former is regularly affected by wildfires, hurricanes, tornadoes, storms and flooding, and the latter is one of the most seismically active areas in the world (in addition to being exposed to storms and heavy rain, flooding and landslides, wildfires, coastal storms and windstorms). Georgia also experiences severe storms, flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes, windstorms and has also faced flooding from a dam collapse in 1977. Illinois is prone to storms and heavy rains, flooding, tornadoes, snow storms, flash floods and windstorms and Minnesota to storms and heavy rains, flooding and landslides, tornadoes, blizzards, ice storms, heavy rains, landslides and mudslides. New York, North Carolina, Texas and Washington have also experienced a vast array of severe hazard events – most recently due to the landfall of hurricane Sandy in 2012. Indiana experiences recurrent, severe snow storms, windstorms, tornadoes, flooding and severe storms. Arizona is exposed to storms, flooding, wildfires, tornadoes, heavy rain, flash floods and windstorms (FEMA, 2016).

FEMA is mandated with the role of disaster management, response and recovery in the United States. While non-monetary disaster assistance is

provided on a non-discriminatory basis, not all kinds of relief and recovery support are accessible to foreigners, in particular those in irregular situation: this translates in reduced access to assistance and more acute vulnerability in disasters. A variety of other actors – from the civil society, the public and private sector, as well as the military – are engaged in disaster management in the United States. The role of civil society is particularly important to complement official assistance for disaster-affected foreigners.

## OTHER DESTINATIONS

### China

Figure 22 shows the concentration of Myanmar migrants in China. Yunnan is the area hosting the most migrants, with an estimated 40,000, while Ruili hosts 10,000. Other places in China with significant yet unconfirmed numbers of Myanmar migrants are the Shanghai and Beijing municipalities, Guangdong, Jiangsu, Fujian, Zhejiang, Shandong and Liaoning provinces, and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (Haime, 2011). Recurrent displacement along the Kachin–China border has led a number of Myanmar nationals to move on the Chinese side of the border, in Laiza and Mai Ja Yang – most recently after the 2011 episodes of violence.

**Figure 22. Map of China showing main areas with Myanmar migrants**



Source: Own elaboration.

### **Saudi Arabia**

The plight of Muslims from Rakhine state in Myanmar has drawn international attention over the years, and Saudi Arabia accepted the largest number of them as refugees. It is estimated that 250,000 Muslims from Myanmar currently live in Saudi Arabia. The majority of them live in Makkah Al-Mukarramah's slums, Naqqasha and Kudai. They sell vegetables, sweep streets, work as porters, carpenters, unskilled labourers, and those fortunate enough become drivers. They face arrest and strict regulation on their movement and employment and face extortion and torture by Saudi Police (Ahmad, 2015). Some of the poor Muslims from Myanmar in Saudi Arabia resort to marrying their daughters to old and wealthy Saudis in pursuit of "favours", but their daughters often get divorced or are forced to live in obscurity as second-class wives as they fail to be recognized by the Saudi society. The most frequent disaster affecting Saudi Arabia is flooding with major events leading to fatalities having

occurred seven times from 1964 to 2009 (Alamri, 2010:5). Other major hazards usually occur during the month of Ramadan when millions of Muslims congregate in Makkah for Hajj. Stampedes and fires have on numerous occasions led to hundreds of death among the pilgrims. Outbreaks of epidemics such as Rift Valley fever and meningitis also occur in the Saudi Arabia and cause fatalities. A major factor exposing migrant workers in Saudi Arabia who constitute 53.1 per cent of the labour force to higher levels of vulnerability to hazards is that most emergency warnings are communicated in Arabic, which most migrants may not understand (ibid.:6). The authority responsible for managing emergencies in Saudi Arabia is now the General Directorate of Civil Defense (GDCD). Under a "civil defense" law promulgated in 1987, the GDCD is given powers to conduct all operations needed to protect civilians and public and private properties from the dangers of fires, natural disasters, wars and other accidents. The GDCD structure consists of a board that exercises oversight, executives who



carry out operational work, and volunteers who help in times of emergencies.

## Singapore

The 2004<sup>9</sup> Myanmar Census reported 79,659 migrants from Myanmar residing in Singapore. The UNHCR's Singapore Fact Sheet indicates that the country hosted 500,364 refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar in 2014 (2014b). The profile of documented migrants from Myanmar in Singapore is somewhat unique, as they include a large share of highly skilled professionals (civil and electrical engineers, medical personnel, planners and architects). However, the country also hosts less skilled workers in a variety of sectors, such as manufacturing, services and the tourism industry, and domestic workers. Singapore faces a series of natural hazards including earthquakes, floods and strong winds. As a city State, Singapore has a unique emergency response planning system. The lead agency for disaster response is the Singapore Civil Defense Force (SCDF). The disaster response framework within which the SCDF operates allows it to activate the national response plan in the event of an emergency. The Plan "outlines the work of the SCDF and all the Related Agencies (RAs) in the management of an incident. Under this plan, the SCDF as the Incident Manager is in overall charge of multi-agency response. The Incident Manager directs and coordinates all the agencies' ground response forces through the Joint Planning Staff (consisting of representatives from all agencies) who support the Incident Manager with specialist advice for planning and mitigation of the incident. The Ops CE Plan is exercised according to various scenarios, such as oil refinery fires, air crashes, fires in high-rise buildings and building collapses" (ADRC, 2005:87).

## India

India also hosts large numbers of Myanmar migrants, despite the downward trend of recent years. In Mizoram, there is an estimated 40,000 of them. Other host cities include New Delhi, Moreh, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh (UNODC, 2012). India is prone to many hazards, including frequent earthquakes, floods, cyclones, droughts, tsunamis, landslides and avalanches. Under the 2005 National

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<sup>9</sup> The 2010 Census results did not provide figures of migrants from Myanmar but aggregated them under "Other Asian countries".

Disaster Management Act, the National Disaster Management Authority has been established, under the lead of the Prime Minister. The authority provides overall oversight and coordination of disaster management policies, plans and guidelines. State Disaster Management authorities implement and operationalize the disaster management plans.

## Viet Nam

According to census data, Viet Nam hosts 9,783 migrants from Myanmar. According to the Viet Nam National Committee for Incident, Disaster Response, and Search and Rescue of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Viet Nam's main hazards include typhoons, floods, droughts, cyclones, landslides, earthquakes and tsunamis, as well as man-made disasters, such as fires, biochemical incidents, and river and maritime accidents. Typhoons bring heavy rainfall to Viet Nam, causing extensive damage in densely populated coastal areas and in the areas along the Red River and the Mekong Delta (CFE-DMHA, 2015:26). Under Decree No. 168-HDBT of 19 May 1990 by the Viet Nam Council of Ministers, the Central Committee of Storm and Flood Control (CCSFC), and committees and sectors at all levels (provincial, district and village) were established. General oversight and coordination at the national level is performed by an inter-ministerial national committee. The committee receives support from the Department of Dike Management and Flood Control (DDMFC) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). All regulations and mitigation measures and guidelines related to floods and typhoons are formulated by the CCSFC, MARD ([www.adrc.asia](http://www.adrc.asia)).

## Republic of Korea

In the Republic of Korea, about 16,000 Myanmar migrants are found in Seoul and in the Gyeonggi Province. The Republic of Korea is affected by typhoons that trigger heavy rains and flooding. It is also affected by landslides, storms, drought and sandstorms. The disaster management policies of the Republic of Korea are stipulated in the Disaster Risk Management and Reduction Act of 2008. Other laws regulating disaster management and response include the Disaster and Safety Management Basic Act enacted in 2004 and the Natural Disaster Countermeasures Act enacted in 1995, the Special Law on Reduction of Disaster Risk and Emigration Measure in 2007. All disaster management and response is carried out by the



National Emergency Management Agency, which falls under the Ministry of Public Administration and Security.

## Japan

Most of the migrants from Myanmar in Japan arrived as part of a refugee resettlement pilot programme and are hosted in several cities including Suzuka, Mie Misato, Saitama Shiki, Saitama Edogawa Ward, Tokyo Higashimurayama City, Tokyo, Kasukabe, Saitama and Chiba (Treviranus and Törngren, 2015). Japan had 1,942 refugees from Myanmar in 2015 according to the UNHCR. Japan's geographic location makes it exposed to earthquakes, storms, typhoons and tsunamis. The Disaster Countermeasures Act of 1961 established the Central Disaster Management Council with a mandate to provide comprehensive disaster management. The actual planning and management of disaster risks and response is further devolved to prefectures and local municipalities where disaster management councils implement risk management plans. The devolved disaster management councils have representation from local government organizations, police, fire department and other local public organizations. While Japan has a well-established disaster risk management system, which also generally caters to needs of foreigners, recent disasters, such as the 2011 triple disaster in the Tohoku area, have shown that challenges in accessing information and assistance are recurrent for foreign nationals, and in particular those who do not speak Japanese (Duncan, 2013).

## Australia

In Australia, Myanmar migrants are mostly located in Western Australia (7,456), Victoria (5,607), New South Wales (5,607) and Queensland (1,897). Australia is exposed to bush fires, floods, storms, earthquakes and landslides. The main Australian agencies involved in disaster response including disaster management are the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Defense (Defense), the Attorney-General's Department, and the Australian Federal Police (CFE-DMHA, 2016:21). Australia has developed a set of guidelines for emergency management in culturally and linguistically diverse communities, which aims to cater for the needs of minorities, including migrants, in the case of disasters, and promotes a variety of local-level programmes to adapt disaster preparedness, response and recovery work to their cultural specificities and needs (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006).





# MIGRATION-RELATED INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES IN MYANMAR

This section provides an analysis of the Myanmar national institutional structures that are in charge of assisting migrants abroad, including in emergencies, by examining their mandates, institutional capacity and past and ongoing relevant activities. It looks at governmental and non-governmental actors and structures serving Myanmar migrants in transit and places of destination, analysing the environment in which they operate and the services they offer to migrants.

The Government of Myanmar recognizes the need to prepare and mitigate effects of crisis on all Myanmar nationals including those residing abroad. This is reflected in its management rules enacted in the 2015 Disaster Management Plan that set out clear authority and structures, as well as operational guidelines on appropriate approaches to disasters occurring in Myanmar and outside that may affect the country's nationals. The management rules are comprehensive and include response to all emergencies.

The National Disaster Management Rules of 2015 establish the National Committee for Disaster Management as the highest organ with the authority to appoint any ministry, department or agency as a "competent authority" for activities related to disaster response. Implicitly, this grants the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) the mandate to coordinate response to disasters affecting Myanmar nationals abroad. The 2015 rules provide broad cover for mechanisms for disaster management, including initial assessments, declaration and post-disaster activities.

The rules provide for the establishment of a competent authority for international communication with an explicit mandate assigned by the National Committee, "to act as an authority in coordination and communication with international organizations, overseas regional organizations, foreign government departments and government agencies, non-government organizations for the international assistance required in disaster management activities stipulated in the Law and

these Rules". The rules provide a mechanism for inter-agency cooperation and coordination by indicating in Chapter X that the Ministry assigned by the National Committee as the competent authority for international communication shall "communicate and collaborate with the assisting international actors regarding the humanitarian assistance when the disaster occurs in neighbouring countries and countries in the region".

These rules propose a coordinated approach involving multiple actors with a lead "competent" authority. The relevant ministries and agencies that may be involved include the Department of Relief and Resettlement, the Department of Metrology and Hydrology, the Myanmar Fire Services Department, the Public Works Department, the Central Statistical Organization, the Department of Education Planning and Training, the General Administration Department, the Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications, the Settlement and Land Records Department, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Health, and the Planning Department. International organizations and agencies involved include UNHCR, IOM, ICRC and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, international donors and international maritime rescue agencies. In the case of Myanmar residents abroad, the "competent" authority is the MOFA, which would coordinate assistance in case of emergency in cooperation with host national agencies, international organizations and other relevant Myanmar agencies.

The MOFA operates in emergencies through its network of embassies and consulates and in liaison with relevant host government's departments. Myanmar embassies and consulates abroad offer consular assistance, information services, trade facilitation and issue notices and updates on emergencies and disasters affecting citizens of Myanmar. The Department of Labour also provides normal-time services that might be relevant to emergency prevention, preparedness and response through its labour attachés at the embassies. Their collective mandate includes routine support to

**Table 11. Myanmar representations in host countries**

Country	Locations
Thailand	Bangkok, Chiang Mai
Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur
Singapore	Singapore
China	Beijing, Kunming, Hong Kong and Nanning
Japan	Tokyo
Republic of Korea	Seoul
India	New Delhi, Kolkata
United States and Permanent Mission to UN	Washington, D.C., New York and Los Angeles
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh
United Kingdom	London
Australia	Canberra
Brazil	Brasilia
Indonesia and Permanent Mission to ASEAN	Jakarta
Brunei Darussalam	Bandar Seri Begawan
Cambodia	Phnom Penh
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Vientiane
Philippines	Manila
Viet Nam	Hanoi
Bangladesh	Dhaka
Nepal	Kathmandu
Sri Lanka	Colombo
Pakistan	Islamabad
Egypt	Cairo
Israel	Tel Aviv
Kuwait	Kuwait
South Africa	Pretoria
France	Paris
Swiss and Permanent Mission to UN and other organizations	Geneva
Germany	Berlin
Italy	Rome
Russian Federation	Moscow
Serbia	Belgrade
Belgium	Brussels
Norway	Oslo
Austria	Vienna
Canada	Ottawa

Source: [www.embassy-worldwide.com/country/myanmar/](http://www.embassy-worldwide.com/country/myanmar/)

Myanmar nationals abroad in non-crisis times, including by building and maintaining relationships with migrants, registering migrants, issuing of identity cards and Certificates of Identify, social security services, work accident compensation assistance, negotiating on behalf of migrants to get labour rights in their countries of destination, and, in Thailand, providing assistance for the Nationality Verification process. In addition, these

institutions are primarily mandated to protect migrant victims of any forms of crisis abroad, including by gathering and circulating information, and providing shelter for those in need.

Myanmar has missions in 36 countries, as shown in Table 11. There is an embassy in each of the countries that host the largest number of immigrants from Myanmar. In China, in addition

to the embassy in Beijing, there are consular representatives in Hong Kong, China, Kunming and Nanning, while in the United States, the embassy is located in Washington, D.C. and the Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York. Each of the other major destination countries has one embassy, mostly in the capital city. Other agencies responsible for assisting Myanmar nationals abroad include UN agencies and international NGOs, including IOM, ILO, MAT Thailand and Australia Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Under the overseas employment law, a central committee comprising of various ministers and other key stakeholders under the lead of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population is in charge of managing all processes related to overseas employment. It assists with employment abroad, registering those seeking jobs outside the country and issuing a certificate of registration to them before their departure. The pre-departure assistance is provided by a number of agencies that include the Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Immigration and Population, Department of Social Welfare, Department of Labour, and Myanmar Police Force. Others are the UNHCR, ILO, IOM and other NGOs, such as Myanmar Red Cross Society, Myanmar War Veteran Organization, Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, and Myanmar Women's Affairs Association.

This system is complemented by efforts to eliminate unregulated labour brokers and work closely with destination countries, civil society, employees and migrant welfare organizations. The overseas employment law attempts to do so by stipulating the terms, duties and responsibilities of licensed labour brokers referred to as "serve agents". Other forms of support that are vested in the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population include family tracing, medical examination and awareness-raising information dissemination. The Ministry of Social Welfare is competent for return and reintegration assistance. Migrants are also entitled to assistance to pursue compensation for unpaid dues and other forms of loss-related compensation. An All-Time Complaint Centre has also been established to take prompt action with regard to the matter relating to migrant workers working abroad.

The country also has a system in place to facilitate return and reintegration of migrants having experienced hardship and crises. The Department of Relief and Resettlement and the Department of

Social Welfare assist the return of trafficked persons and other migrants. The migrants they usually assist have often suffered from exploitation, physical and psychological abuse, confinement and in some cases, sexual abuse. Other Myanmar entities that play a role in this are the Immigration and National Registration departments, Myanmar embassies, wards and village tracts administrators, the police force (especially when they return after being arrested in destination countries), Department of Labour, and local and international NGOs.

Beginning from 2016, with the advent of new democratic civilian government, the attitude towards the Myanmar nationals abroad changed totally. The State Counsellor and the Minister for Foreign Affairs gave instructions to the Myanmar Diplomatic Missions and Consular Offices to extend every possible assistance to those Myanmar nationals, temporarily living in foreign countries, without any reservation.







# CONCLUSION

Myanmar is the source of the largest number of migrants in the GMS. Over 85 per cent of Myanmar migrants reside in Thailand and Malaysia. In their countries of destination, they are often vulnerable to a variety of natural and man-made hazards, as well as the impacts of economic crises and civil unrest. This vulnerability depends on their access to services, options for accessing assistance, support networks – all of which are influenced by their migration experience. Migrants that move in precarious, unsafe and informal conditions, often having left the country as a result of disasters or conflict, or who have been trafficked and smuggled, are most likely to be among the most vulnerable in the face of crises. Crises affecting countries in which migrants live and work are therefore likely to generate a demand for relief and recovery assistance by Myanmar nationals.

In places of destination, Myanmar migrants are most likely to access assistance in times of crises through welfare organizations formed by the migrants themselves, especially in smaller crisis situations in which local capacities may not be fully overwhelmed. In large-scale crisis, local NGOs, international NGOs, UN agencies and government agencies of the host countries also play a role providing assistance. Myanmar embassies and consulates are a key element of this system, providing both normal-time services that are key to emergency management (e.g. identifying and contacting migrants, issuing documents, assisting in labour and compensation disputes) and specific relief and recovery services (e.g. emergency shelter). The interviews allowed to identify in what areas this system may need improvements, including strengthening registration capacities in order to collect migrants' data, provide vocational training, increase awareness-raising activities around risks of migration, and protect the rights of migrants. Profiling and tracking of Myanmar migrants abroad would be essential for improved provision of assistance, including in times of emergency. Relevant information sources can be the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Education and the MOFA, as well as NGOs, social media and religious centres.

The national disaster response plans and mechanism in place in most of the Myanmar migrants' countries of destination offer sound approaches to deal with disasters within the confines of their national sovereignty. However, they subsume the needs of migrants within the national context and do not specify how to address their specific conditions of vulnerability. This exposes the migrants to the risk of receiving little or no assistance in emergencies, especially for those who may be in irregular situation. Regional organs and initiatives however offer a good collaborative platform and a chance to harmonize legalization and response plans to include migrants.

The advent of a new democratic civilian government in 2016 has offered a new opportunity for Myanmar nationals inside and outside the country. As noted earlier in this report, the new government has committed itself to offer all required assistance to Myanmar nationals abroad. With the new emerging attitude of the present Government, a new policy declaration for Myanmar nationals abroad is desirable. The Law on Overseas Employment only deals with Myanmar workers going abroad for employment and does not include provisions for relief and repatriation measures in times of emergency. A separate national law for assistance, protection, relief and repatriation of Myanmar nationals who are in a country experiencing a conflict or disaster would help to have a legal basis for such kind of assistance and measures.

With a view to the practical application of the provisions of the law, a high-level committee for assistance, relief, repatriation and reintegration for Myanmar national migrants should be formed and empowered with responsibilities provided in the law.

It is hoped that cooperation with governments in the ASEAN region and beyond will lead to better and more inclusive assistance mechanisms. The new political climate might also lead to advancements in the resolution of internal conflicts and in the situation of Muslims from Myanmar, which could have significant migration and return implications.





# ANNEX A. TABLES

**Table I. Main destinations of migrants from Myanmar by sex, 1990 to 2013**

Year	Sex	Country of destination										Total
		Thailand	%	Malaysia	%	Republic of Korea	%	India	%	United States	%	
1990	Male	137,948	70	4,485	2	94	0.0	44,527	22	11,458	6	198,512
	Female	91,556	63	2,173	2	8	0.0	41,179	28	11,369	8	
	Total	229,504	67	6,658	2	102	0.0	85,706	25	22,827	7	
2000	Male	394,930	86	14,529	3	1,107	0.2	31,961	7	15,869	4	458,396
	Female	339,199	86	6,751	2	86	0.0	29,922	8	19,249	5	
	Total	734,129	86	21,280	3	1,193	0.1	61,883	7	35,118	4	
2010	Male	894,933	79	163,391	15	3,431	0.3	26,972	2	41,848	4	1,130,575
	Female	753,669	83	73,181	8	275	0.0	25,498	3	53,056	6	
	Total	1,648,602	81	236,572	12	3,706	0.2	52,470	3	94,904	5	
2013	Male	981,432	80	172,737	14	4,401	0.4	26,473	2	43,365	4	1,228,408
	Female	911,048	85	75,031	7	347	0.0	25,056	2	54,979	5	
	Total	1,892,480	83	247,768	11	4,748	0.2	51,529	2	98,344	4	

Source: Administration of Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement 2005–2009.

Note: Data for China, Singapore and Japan not available.

**Table II: Stock of Myanmar nationals living abroad by country of residence, age and sex, 2014**

Age	Gender	Country of destination									Total
		Thailand	Malaysia	Singapore	China	Japan	Republic of Korea	India	United States	Other	
0-9	Male	23,435	1,936	479	1,046	63	29	494	748	491	28,721
	Female	22,217	1,617	488	1,174	52	8	449	737	490	
	Total	45,652	3,553	967	2,220	115	37	943	1,485	981	
10-19	Male	115,430	16,890	1,187	11,720	111	137	1,889	1,043	1,702	150,109
	Female	95,959	4,132	3,969	8,701	104	29	1,377	886	1,347	
	Total	211,389	21,022	5,156	20,421	215	166	3,266	1,929	3,049	
20-49	Male	631,214	223,345	35,485	39,031	3,703	13,655	7,900	18,194	26,324	998,851
	Female	474,591	51,495	34,881	28,019	2,840	416	4,777	12,201	15,423	
	Total	1,105,805	274,840	70,366	67,050	6,543	14,071	12,677	30,395	41,747	
50+	Male	17,434	3,601	1,927	1,329	437	297	634	1,952	2,591	30,202
	Female	12,907	980	1,243	1,232	287	21	455	1,816	1,411	
	Total	30,341	4,581	3,170	2,561	724	318	1,089	3,768	4,002	
Total		1,393,187	303,996	79,659	92,252	7,597	14,592	17,975	37,577	49,779	1,996,614

Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

**Table III. Main destinations of migrants from Myanmar by sex, 1990 to 2013**

Major area, region, country or area of destination	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	% change, 1990–2015
World	205,303	311,832	460,970	704,613	991,063	1,243,470	83
Developed regions	22,742	26,872	30,887	41,637	59,826	85,870	74
Developing regions	182,561	284,960	430,083	662,976	931,237	1,157,600	84
Least developed countries	16,125	16,423	16,704	19,961	23,236	24,325	34
Less developed regions excluding least developed countries	166,436	268,537	413,379	643,015	908,001	1,133,275	85
Sub-Saharan Africa	166	95	56	68	110	139	-19
Africa	168	96	57	69	111	140	-20
Northern Africa	2	1	1	1	1	1	-100
Egypt	2	1	1	1	1	1	-100
Southern Africa	166	95	56	68	110	139	-19
South Africa	166	95	56	68	110	139	-19
Asia	182,384	284,857	430,020	662,903	931,111	1,157,444	84
Eastern Asia	6	40	86	137	252	389	98
Republic of Korea	6	40	86	137	252	389	98
South-Eastern Asia	93,563	197,622	347,433	573,546	831,346	1,042,412	91
Cambodia	8	21	34	26	18	16	50
Lao People's Democratic Republic	191	172	136	123	129	135	-41
Malaysia	1,391	3,090	5,170	35,471	69,661	70,798	98
Philippines	23	85	174	192	223	226	90
Thailand	91,556	193,116	339,199	534,912	757,863	966,851	90
Viet Nam	394	1,138	2,720	2,822	3,452	4,386	91
Southern Asia	58,830	53,222	47,736	48,748	49,779	49,968	-18
Bangladesh	15,920	16,223	16,526	19,802	23,077	24,161	34
Bhutan	6	7	8	10	12	13	54
India	41,179	35,551	29,922	27,710	25,498	24,613	-67
Pakistan	1,725	1,441	1,280	1,226	1,192	1,181	-46
Western Asia	29,985	33,973	34,765	40,472	49,734	64,675	54
Cyprus	8	12	16	23	37	38	79
Saudi Arabia	29,975	33,956	34,740	40,440	49,688	64,628	54
Turkey	2	5	9	9	9	9	78
Europe	6,318	6,170	6,168	7,620	10,761	12,991	51
Eastern Europe	213	132	46	45	44	74	-188
Czech Republic	0	0	0	12	23	54	100
Hungary	4	4	3	4	5	4	0.00
Russian Federation	209	128	43	29	16	16	-1,206
Northern Europe	5,580	5,370	5,261	6,395	8,954	10,869	49
Denmark	30	32	34	271	508	785	96
Finland	4	13	21	235	449	760	99
Ireland	6	17	36	34	31	32	81
Norway	5	14	18	217	1,146	1,549	100
Sweden	34	41	45	202	664	734	95
United Kingdom	5,501	5,253	5,107	5,436	6,156	7,009	22
Southern Europe	38	71	151	213	305	318	88
Greece	18	13	8	7	6	6	-200

Italy	18	54	90	180	269	274	93
Spain	2	4	53	26	30	38	95
Western Europe	487	597	710	967	1,458	1,730	72
Austria	22	25	27	31	34	39	44
Belgium	11	11	11	20	28	41	73
France	319	335	350	216	217	235	-36
Germany	55	125	195	501	807	835	93
Netherlands	25	37	53	106	249	446	94
Switzerland	55	64	74	93	123	134	59
Latin America and the Caribbean	9	7	6	4	15	16	44
Central America	7	5	6	4	9	9	22
Costa Rica	7	5	6	4	8	8	13
Panama	0	0	0	0	1	1	100
South America	2	2	0	0	6	7	71
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Brazil	0	0	0	0	6	7	100
Chile	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Northern America	11,293	14,508	18,249	26,773	36,384	57,108	80
Canada	1,199	1,545	1,928	2,929	4,099	4,584	74
United States	10,094	12,963	16,321	23,844	32,285	52,524	81
Oceania	5,131	6,194	6,470	7,244	12,681	15,771	67
Australia	4,934	5,876	6,120	6,830	11,900	14,635	66
New Zealand	197	318	350	414	781	1,136	83

Source: UN DESA, 2015.

**Table IV. Male migrants from Myanmar, 1990–2015**

Major area, region, country or area of destination	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	% change, 1990–2005
World	379,777	499,296	660,812	1,010,437	1,445,325	1,638,327	77
Developed regions	21,726	25,956	30,486	41,732	59,314	84,237	74
Developing regions	358,051	473,340	630,326	968,705	1,386,011	1,554,090	77
Least developed countries	110,170	112,518	114,849	141,171	167,504	177,356	38
Less developed regions excluding least developed countries	247,881	360,822	515,477	827,534	1,218,507	1,376,734	82
Sub-Saharan Africa	45	36	34	39	62	79	43
Africa	52	44	42	49	73	92	43
Northern Africa	7	8	8	10	11	13	46
Egypt	7	8	8	10	11	13	46
Southern Africa	45	36	34	39	62	79	43
South Africa	45	36	34	39	62	79	43
Asia	357,953	473,241	630,217	968,577	1,385,835	1,553,879	77
Eastern Asia	82	512	1,107	1,839	3,290	11,125	99
Republic of Korea	82	512	1,107	1,839	3,290	11,125	99
South-Eastern Asia	141,955	252,608	411,061	705,917	1,068,753	1,200,137	88
Cambodia	16	42	68	54	40	36	56
Lao People's Democratic Republic	213	188	146	122	109	114	-87
Malaysia	3,177	7,080	11,671	85,300	171,769	181,494	98
Philippines	32	85	159	173	192	195	84
Thailand	137,948	243 661	394,930	615,256	890,739	1,011,497	86
Viet Nam	569	1,552	4,087	5,012	5,904	6,801	92
Southern Asia	156,341	152,091	147,979	171,787	195,614	204,459	24
Bangladesh	109,931	112,276	114,621	140,978	167,335	177,185	38
Bhutan	10	12	14	17	20	21	52
India	44,527	38 244	31 962	29,467	26,972	25,974	-71
Pakistan	1,873	1,559	1,382	1,325	1,287	1,279	-46
Western Asia	59,575	68,030	70,070	89,034	118,178	138,158	57
Cyprus	3	4	4	7	11	12	75
Jordan	2	16	29	42	55	26	92
Saudi Arabia	59,554	67,994	70,010	88,958	118,084	138,092	57
Turkey	16	16	27	27	28	28	43
Europe	5,939	5,945	6,091	8,062	11,894	13,742	57
Eastern Europe	207	215	217	432	636	689	70
Czech Republic	1	1	1	18	34	74	99
Hungary	4	3	3	3	3	5	20
Russian Federation	202	211	213	411	599	610	67
Northern Europe	4,969	4,802	4,700	5,998	8,793	10,232	51
Denmark	13	22	30	389	748	1,011	99
Finland	3	16	29	272	514	739	100
Iceland	0	0	0	0	0	1	100
Ireland	6	18	40	42	32	32	81
Norway	25	33	38	297	1,287	1,587	98
Sweden	64	75	80	240	739	807	92
United Kingdom	4,858	4,638	4,483	4,758	5,473	6,055	20



Southern Europe	39	69	180	181	232	230	83
Greece	24	18	13	14	14	14	-71
Italy	10	43	75	123	172	167	94
Spain	5	8	92	44	46	49	90
Western Europe	724	859	994	1,451	2,233	2,591	72
Austria	17	19	22	24	26	32	47
Belgium	16	16	15	36	53	104	85
France	354	360	366	153	219	237	-49
Germany	221	306	390	892	1,393	1,441	85
Netherlands	61	89	118	255	449	658	91
Switzerland	55	69	83	91	93	119	54
Latin America and the Caribbean	46	55	67	79	103	119	61
Central America	26	35	47	64	87	101	74
Costa Rica	3	3	3	2	4	4	25
Panama	23	32	44	62	83	97	76
South America	20	20	20	15	16	18	-11
Argentina	19	19	19	14	9	9	-111
Brazil	0	0	0	0	6	7	100
Chile	1	1	1	1	1	2	50
Northern America	10,879	14,173	18,063	26,768	35,316	55,150	80
Canada	1,138	1,450	1,796	2,774	3,925	4,383	74
United States of America	9,741	12 723	16,267	23,994	31,391	50,767	81
Oceania	4,908	5,838	6,332	6,902	12,104	15,345	68
Australia	4,742	5,562	6,000	6,510	11,370	14,281	67
New Zealand	166	276	332	392	734	1,064	84

Source: UN DESA, 2015.

**Table V. Total migrants from Myanmar, 1990–2015**

Major area, region, country or area of destination	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	% change 1990–2015
World	585,080	811,128	1,121,782	1,715,050	2,436,388	2,881,797	80
Developed regions	44,468	52,828	61,373	83,369	119,140	170,107	74
Developing regions	540,612	758,300	1,060,409	1,631,681	2,317,248	2,711,690	80
Least developed countries	126,295	128,941	131,553	161,132	190,740	201,681	37
Less developed regions excluding least developed countries	414,317	629,359	928,856	1,470,549	2,126,508	2,510,009	83
Sub-Saharan Africa	211	131	90	107	172	218	3
Africa	220	140	99	118	184	232	5
Northern Africa	9	9	9	11	12	14	36
Egypt	9	9	9	11	12	14	36
Southern Africa	211	131	90	107	172	218	3
South Africa	211	131	90	107	172	218	3
Asia	540,337	758,098	1,060,237	1,631,480	2,316,946	2,711,323	80
Eastern Asia	88	552	1,193	1,976	3,542	11,514	99
Republic of Korea	88	552	1,193	1,976	3,542	11,514	99
South-Eastern Asia	235,518	450,230	758,494	1,279,463	1,900,099	2,242,549	90
Cambodia	24	63	102	80	58	52	54
Lao People's Democratic Republic	404	360	282	245	238	249	-62
Malaysia	4,568	10,170	16,841	120,771	241,430	252,292	98
Philippines	55	170	333	365	415	421	87
Thailand	229,504	436,777	734,129	1,150,168	1,648,602	1,978,348	88
Viet Nam	963	2,690	6,807	7,834	9,356	11,187	91
Southern Asia	215,171	205,313	195,715	220,535	245,393	254,427	15
Bangladesh	125,851	128,499	131,147	160,780	190,412	201,346	38
Bhutan	16	19	22	27	32	34	53
India	85,706	73,795	61,884	57,177	52,470	50,587	-69
Pakistan	3,598	3,000	2,662	2,551	2,479	2,460	-46
Western Asia	89,560	102,003	104,835	129,506	167,912	202,833	56
Cyprus	11	16	20	30	48	50	78
Jordan	2	16	29	42	55	26	92
Saudi Arabia	89,529	101,950	104,750	129,398	167,772	202,720	56
Turkey	18	21	36	36	37	37	51
Europe	12,257	12,115	12,259	15,682	22,655	26,733	54
Eastern Europe	420	347	263	477	680	763	45
Czech Republic	1	1	1	30	57	128	99
Hungary	8	7	6	7	8	9	11
Russian Federation	411	339	256	440	615	626	34
Northern Europe	10,549	10,172	9,961	12,393	17,747	21,101	50
Denmark	43	54	64	660	1,256	1,796	98
Finland	7	29	50	507	963	1,499	100
Iceland	0	0	0	0	0	1	100
Ireland	12	35	76	76	63	64	81
Norway	30	47	56	514	2,433	3,136	99
Sweden	98	116	125	442	1,403	1,541	94
United Kingdom	10,359	9,891	9,590	10,194	11,629	13,064	21

Southern Europe	77	140	331	394	537	548	86
Greece	42	31	21	21	20	20	-110
Italy	28	97	165	303	441	441	94
Spain	7	12	145	70	76	87	92
Western Europe	1,211	1,456	1,704	2,418	3,691	4,321	72
Austria	39	44	49	55	60	71	45
Belgium	27	27	26	56	81	145	81
France	673	695	716	369	436	472	-43
Germany	276	431	585	1,393	2,200	2,276	88
Netherlands	86	126	171	361	698	1,104	92
Switzerland	110	133	157	184	216	253	57
Latin America and the Caribbean	55	62	73	83	118	135	59
Central America	33	40	53	68	96	110	70
Costa Rica	10	8	9	6	12	12	17
Panama	23	32	44	62	84	98	77
South America	22	22	20	15	22	25	12
Argentina	19	19	19	14	9	9	-111
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Brazil	0	0	0	0	12	14	100
Chile	2	2	1	1	1	2	0
Northern America	22,172	28,681	36,312	53,541	71,700	112,258	80
Canada	2,337	2,995	3,724	5,703	8,024	8,967	74
United States of America	19,835	25,686	32,588	47,838	63,676	103,291	81
Oceania	10,039	12,032	12,802	14,146	24,785	31,116	68
Australia	9,676	11,438	12,120	13,340	23,270	28,916	67
New Zealand	363	594	682	806	1,515	2,200	84

Source: UN DESA, 2015.

**Table VI: Length of stay abroad by country of destination, 2014**

Country	Length of stay												
	Total	Less than 15 months	%	15 months to 4 years	%	5 to 9 years	%	10 to 19 years	%	Over 20 years	%	Not stated	%
All countries	2,021,910	624,196	31	742,097	37	396,469	20	206,186	10	27,362	1	25,600	1
Thailand	1,418,472	420,281	30	537,601	38	271,386	19	154,744	11	17,462	1	16,998	1
Malaysia	303,996	81,521	27	131,230	43	67,460	22	18,404	6	1,645	1	3,736	1
Singapore	79,659	29,173	37	23,560	30	18,170	23	6,805	9	1,001	1	950	1
China	92,263	55,444	60	20,413	22	8,358	9	5,221	6	1,415	2	1,412	2
Japan	7,597	2,332	31	1,627	21	1,830	24	1,080	14	595	8	133	2
Republic of Korea	14,592	7,912	54	4,969	34	1,005	7	445	3	73	1	188	1
India	17,975	5,927	33	4,547	25	3,540	20	2,698	15	893	5	370	2
United States	37,577	3,603	10	6,388	17	15,002	40	9,667	26	2,032	5	885	2
Other	49,779	18,003	36	11,762	24	9,718	20	7,122	14	2,246	5	928	2

Source: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census Main Report.

**Table VII: Myanmar nationals with work permit in Thailand by region of residence**

Region/Area	Number and per cent of Myanmar migrants with work permits	
	Numbers	%
Bangkok	73,872	7
Bangkok vicinity	373,088	35
Central region	178,911	17
Northern region	148,461	14
North-Eastern	11,252	1
Southern region	267,855	25
Total Thailand	1,053,439	100

Source: Beesey, Limsakul and McDougall, 2016.

# ANNEX B. QUESTIONNAIRE

## Myanmar migrants' risks assessment Migrants from Myanmar and Risks Faced Abroad

### Introduction and guidance

Many thanks for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.

This assessment of the risks faced by migrants from Myanmar is carried out as part of the implementation of an IOM-led project for capacity-building targeting Guatemala, Mexico, Myanmar and Thailand. The project is designed to complement the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative which is a State-led political process, co-chaired by the United States and the Philippines, that aims to produce a set of guiding principles and a compilation of effective practices on how to better protect and assist migrants in the event of an acute crisis.

The project is currently being implemented by IOM in collaboration with the Government of Myanmar. The information gathered through this assessment will assist in the development of an approach to assistance and protect migrants from Myanmar as part of the larger multi-country MICIC response to migration flows in acute crisis events.

When filling in the questionnaire please take notice of the following:

1. If you do fill the questionnaire by hand please do so in a clear and organized fashion to allow us to read easily and to make the most out of the information you provide.
2. The migrants risks assessment questionnaire is being distributed both to officials who deal only with migration issues and to others who may come across vulnerable migrants from Myanmar, while the focus of their daily work is different. It is of high importance that you state clearly your function and the entity for which you work.
3. If you do not know an answer to a question, please write "I do not know". This too provides us with useful information that can assist in the development of appropriate assistance responses. But please do your best to provide us with any information you do know.
4. If the space provided for an answer is not sufficient you are welcome to use the last page of the questionnaire and to add more pages as needed.
5. Please send the filled in questionnaire back to IOM Myanmar in Yangon at the requested time so that it can be collected and sent to the consultant in time to be included in the information analysis.
6. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact IOM Myanmar Yangon office using the contact details provided below.

Again, thank you very much for your cooperation,  
David Ndegwa, Consultant

## The Questionnaire

Filled in by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Function/job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Job location: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 1: Through your work, have you come across migrants from Myanmar? If yes – where did you encounter them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 2: How would you describe the migrants you encountered?

Asylum seekers

Refugees

Victims of Trafficking (or suspected victims of trafficking)

Unaccompanied or separated migrant children

Stranded Migrants

Stateless Persons

Other types of migrants (specify)

Question 3: If you have encountered any/several or all of the types of migrants above please explain how you got know they were the type of migrants you have described e.g. refugees, asylum seekers, etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 4: Among those migrants you encountered, have you come across some whom you consider to be vulnerable? For example \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 5: Where are the following groups of Myanmar migrants being accommodated where they are?

5.1 Asylum seekers/refugees \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5.2 Victims of trafficking \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5.3 Irregular migrants and rejected asylum seekers \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5.4 Unaccompanied or separated children \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5.5 Stateless migrants \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5.6 Stranded migrants \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5.7 Other groups of vulnerable migrants \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 6: In your view, who are the main entities that come across the migrants first? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 7: In your view, what are the main challenges facing migrants from Myanmar? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Question 8: In your view, what are the main factors that compel the migrants from Myanmar to leave? \_\_\_\_\_

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Question 9: In your view, what are main factors that attract migrants from Myanmar to move to their destinations? \_\_\_\_\_

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Question 10: Where are most of the migrants from Myanmar to be found? \_\_\_\_\_

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Question 11: In those areas of destination, are there places where migrants from Myanmar face risks from natural or human made disasters? If yes, please specify the areas and type of disasters they face? \_\_\_\_\_

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Question 12: Are there other specific difficulties that migrants from Myanmar face in addition to the disaster risks? If yes, please specify the areas and type of difficulties they face? \_\_\_\_\_

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Question 13: What bodies inside Myanmar exist to assist migrants from Myanmar? \_\_\_\_\_

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Question 14: What bodies outside Myanmar exist to assist migrants from Myanmar at their places of destination? \_\_\_\_\_

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Question 15: What form of assistance is provided to the migrants from Myanmar at their places of destination? \_\_\_\_\_

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Question 16: What form of response to the migrants is provided inside Myanmar? \_\_\_\_\_

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Question 17: To your knowledge, are there needs of the migrants that are not currently being met? If yes, please specify. \_\_\_\_\_

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You can continue your answer to any of the questions here. Please mark question numbers clearly. Please feel free to add more pages if needed.

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