

### Regional Initiative

### **Migration in Southeast Asia**

#### **Background**

Migration and more broadly human mobility remains one of the biggest global challenges facing States and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement today. Without sufficient legal and humanitarian protection, migrants are often "living at the margin of conventional health, social and legal systems", more likely to face increased vulnerability and subject to abuse and exploitation.

Millions of people from Southeast Asia will continue to leave their homes in search of better pay and work opportunities, fleeing conflicts, natural disasters, ethnic or communal violence. The rapidly growing magnitude and complexity of the migration phenomena requires urgent and coordinated action from the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, governments and humanitarian actors to ensure that the rights of migrants are protected and treated fairly and with dignity.

In line with the migration resolution adopted at the 31st International Conference, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has officially committed to playing a greater role in the area of migration.

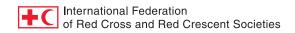
Over the past years, the Southeast Asia Regional Delegation, along with National Societies in the region, has pushed forward the agenda to address the humanitarian concerns surrounding migration, focusing on rights and dignity, respect for diversity and social inclusion but also linking migration with climate change (including increased urbanization) and the challenge of building resilient communities.

"All our discussions about migration would benefit greatly if we put human beings at the centre."

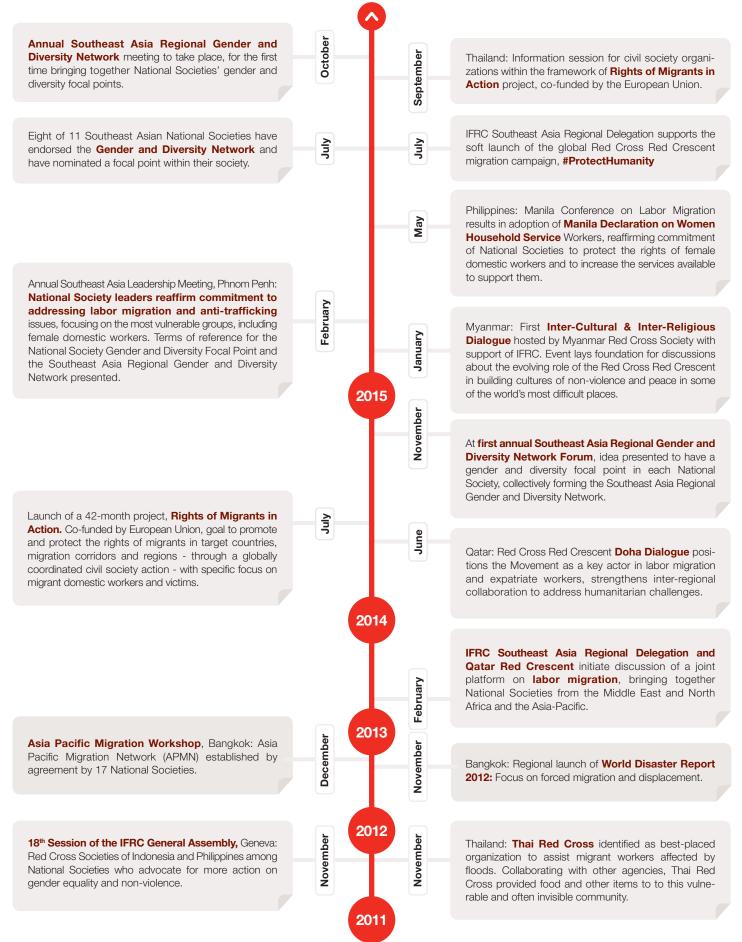
Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



Photo credit: Palang Merah Indonesia



### Key Milestones



In November 2012, a regional launch of the 'World Disaster Report: focus on forced migration and displacement' was organized in Bangkok with key partners such as IOM, OCHA, WFP, USAID, AUSAID, ECHO, EU, Save the Children, Care, Webster University and diplomatic missions. Later that year, the Asia Pacific Migration Network (APMN) was created at the first Asia Pacific Regional Migration Workshop held in Bangkok.

In 2013, discussion of a joint platform, gathering Middle East and North Africa and Asia Pacific National Societies on labor migration, was initiated by the Southeast Asia Regional Delegation together with Qatar Red Crescent. It led to the first Red Cross Red Crescent Doha Dialogue on migration. It laid the foundations for the Movement to become more active in providing assistance to migrant workers and more visible in labor migration advocacy.

The forum concluded with a series of commitments, including, among others, to enhance communication and collaboration between National Societies in sending and receiving countries; and to strengthen advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy around migration, building on the Red Cross Red Crescent's auxiliary role with governments.

As a follow up to the post-Doha commitments, a forum on Intercultural and <u>Interreligious Affairs was held in Yangon</u> in January 2015 and a <u>Manila Conference on Labor Migration</u> in May.

At the annual meeting of the Southeast Asia leadership in Phnom Penh in February 2015, nine of 11 heads of the region's National Societies reaffirmed their commitment to promote understanding and dialogue between relevant stakeholders on matters related to culture, religion and faith. They also addressed marginalized groups and the protection and promotion of migrant workers' rights, to ensure the Movement contributes to building a culture that is respectful of diversity, and that is non-violent and peaceful.



#### What is a Migrant?

There is no internationally recognized definition of migrants. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' policy on migration describes migrants as people who leave or flee their places of habitual residence to go to a new place, across international borders or within their own state, to seek better or safer perspectives. Migration can be forced or voluntary, but most of the time a combination of choices and constraints are involved, as well as the intent to live abroad for an extended period of time.

Our use of the term 'migrant' thus includes:

- labor migrants;
- stateless migrants;
- migrants deemed irregular by public authorities;
- · migrants displaced within their own country; and
- refugees and asylum-seekers.

### **Key Principles embedded in IFRC Policy** on Migration

- 1. Focus on the needs and vulnerabilities of migrants.
- 2. Include migrants in humanitarian programming.
- 3. Support the aspirations of migrants.
- 4. Recognize the rights of migrants. Societies will also promote their social inclusion and their aspirations.
- 5. Link assistance, protection and humanitarian advocacy for migrants.
- 6. Build partnerships for migrants.
- 7. Work along the migratory trails.
- 8. Assist migrants in return.
- 9. Respond to the displacement of populations.
- 10. Alleviate migratory pressures on communities of origin.

#### A holistic and inclusive approach

The approach of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to migration is strictly humanitarian and based on the recognition of each migrant's individuality and aspirations. In response to the complex and diverse nature of humanitarian challenges faced by people on the move, Southeast Asia Regional Delegation will continue supporting National Societies to reinforce their auxiliary role with the public authorities through accelerated advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy efforts.

Strengthening engagement of National Societies with national and regional platforms and key actors such as ASEAN, the Bali Process, the Mekong Commission, the Commit process and the UN agencies will remain a priority. Within the framework of the regional Mekong migration initiative, a special focus will be placed on building strategic partnerships with civil society organizations and local public authorities to increase harmonization and relevance of multi-stakeholder efforts towards the protection of human rights of migrants, in particular migrant domestic workers and victims of human trafficking.

Building on the success of the Doha dialogue, that brought together partners from Asia Pacific, Middle East, North Africa and Europe, the Southeast Asia Regional Delegation will further encourage cross-regional cooperation, dialogue and pooling of global efforts in order to meet the challenges posed by migration.

More effort will be directed to forging new and sustainable partnerships, within and outside the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, with a view to devise a comprehensive plan and mobilize the resources needed.

The Southeast Asia Regional Delegation is also emphasizing the cross-cutting nature of migration-related concerns, the intersections with gender and diversity, disaster response, community preparedness, violence prevention, health and youth.

### Gender and diversity issues in migration

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is increasingly working to ensure issues of gender and diversity are recognized and are fundamental within all of its migration work. Migrants face a unique set of challenges that can impact them at each stage of their journey. However they are not a homogenous group. There are individuals and communities that are at greater risk due to their gender or physical and social differences that cause them to be increasingly vulnerable. Gender and diversity are crosscutting issues that span all types of migration and it is important that we recognize these issues; the vulnerabilities they can lead to; and ensure we address them.

**Gender:** the social differences, rather than the biological differences, between men and women. These differences are learned and changeable over time and context. They are shaped by our culture, beliefs and traditions and impact on men and women's roles, attitudes, behaviors and expectations.

**Diversity:** refers to the differences between people. These differences can be physical or social and can include: gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, HIV status, socio-economic status, religion, nationality and ethnic origin.

### Labor migration and female domestic workers

As the world continues to undergo a process of rapid globalization, factors such as conflict, poverty and growing inequalities have led to an increase in labor migration, notably from countries in Asia Pacific to destination countries in the Middle East, as well as labor migration taking place within Southeast Asia. A large proportion of labor migrants, particularly those who travel to work in the domestic sphere, are women. Female domestic workers often live behind closed doors, and can face abuse, coercion, sexual assault and slavery, undignified work conditions, and other inhumane treatment. By virtue of being behind closed doors, sometimes with few rights to travel outside of the home, these women are hard to reach, and harder still to protect.

In June 2014, representatives from 21 National Societies – both sending and receiving countries, all directly affected by the impact of labor migration – met for the first time under the umbrella of the Red Cross Red Crescent Doha Dialogue on Migration to discuss their current work with migrants workers and to share concerns and success stories. They were joined by members of governments and external agencies, an opportunity for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to be both more visible in the labor migration sector and also to explore potential for partnerships and advocacy at the national and international levels.

As one of the recommendations of the first meeting of the <u>Doha Dialogue</u> in June 2014, the <u>first-ever Regional Inter-cultural and Inter-Religious Dialogue</u> took place in January 2015. This dialogue, co-hosted by Myanmar Red Cross Society, the Centre of International Studies and Strategies and the Interfaith Dialogue group, laid the



Hosted by the Philippine Red Cross and the IFRC, the Manila Conference on Labor Migration was a forum for discussion about labor migration, with a specific focus on female domestic workers. Manila, Philippines,12-13 May 2015. Photo credit: Cheryl Gagalac / IFRC

foundation to bring together National Societies from South and Southeast Asia, academics, interfaith organizations, government representatives and non-governmental organizations and to discuss issues of gender and diversity within migration.

Following this, in May 2015, the <u>Manila Conference on Labor Migration</u> was held. The focus of the Manila Conference was on female household service workers. This ensured that attention was placed on the specific challenges and issues, as well as current initiatives and solutions for female domestic workers. A key outcome was the commitment of participants to work towards a common goal to increase the protection, rights and better provision of services for female household service workers outlined in the <u>Manila Declaration on Women Household Service Workers</u>.

### Human Trafficking in the Mekong countries

Human trafficking is a critical issue in Mekong countries such as Thailand, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam. Young migrants are some of the most vulnerable, being at risk of smuggling, human trafficking and sexual exploitation. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Southeast Asia Regional Delegation is part of the Global Rights of Migrants in Action Project. The final beneficiaries will be vulnerable migrant populations including women, children, migrant domestic

workers, victims of human trafficking and of other severe right's violations within migration contexts. The project will also focus on migrant's families, and potential migrants from targeted countries concerned by migration and mobility. National Societies in Southeast Asia will be supported in efforts to engage with and build the capacity of the participating civil society groups to strengthen further the promotion and protection of the migrant's rights.



### Vulnerable migrant groups are at greater risk during disasters

Southeast Asia is one of the most disaster-prone areas in the world. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is advocating for and raising awareness of the vulnerabilities of migrants in disaster response. Migrants, particularly those whose status becomes informal, may be more vulnerable to trafficking and women and men from poor backgrounds often face being trafficked for labor or sexual exploitation and abuse. It is important that migrants have access to information and services that will increase their preparedness and resilience to disasters.

With the impacts of climate change predicted to lead to the increased intensity and frequency of disasters, migration related to disasters is likely to increase. It presents new legal and protection challenges. This is exacerbated by other factors such as population growth, rapid urbanization, increasing poverty and inequality, as well as increasing environmental and technical hazards. Migrants, particularly those who are undocumented, often live outside of the systems designed to protect communities from disasters. As such, when a disaster hits, they may be intentionally or unintentionally excluded from disaster risk reduction or preparedness programs. This may mean that they are not aware of early warning systems or are less informed of how best to respond when a disaster occurs. When authorities or relief organizations prepare distribution lists for relief aid, migrants that are not registered with the government may not be included. If migrants are residing in a country without proper legal

status, they also may not seek out relief or support following a disaster for fear of their legal status being discovered. Women and girls are disproportionally affected by the impacts of disasters and as such it is important that their specific needs, vulnerabilities and capacities are taken into consideration. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is currently conducting training in Gender in Emergencies which aims to build the capacity of National Society and Federation staff to respond to gender concerns during an emergency in accordance with Red Cross Red Crescent Movement's Fundamental Principles. Gender and diversity focal persons in Southeast Asia (Myanmar and Philippines) have already taken part in this training and through peer-to-peer learning it is aimed that they will be able to share their experience and learnings and train others to respond in a gender-sensitive way.

The protection of marginalized groups in times of disaster is of particular concern. During a disaster, existing social structures can break down and therefore people may lose valuable protective networks that could have kept them safe. In these situations minority groups such as those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex can be at greater risk of discrimination. Further, if disasters cause people to cross boarders into a country were their sexual or gender identity is not accepted or is illegal, this can also lead to protection concerns.



Thai Red Cross helps migrant workers during the Thai Floods of 2011. Photo credit: Félix Genêt Laframboise/IFRC

### Preparedness and response to the needs of irregular migrants

Irregular movements of people from Bangladesh, Myanmar and other South Asia and Southeast Asia countries to other regional countries, especially Malaysia, has been a well-established practice for many years.

From the outset of the Andaman Sea crisis in May, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies together with several National Societies in South Asia and Southeast Asia as well as International Committee of the Red Cross, had been actively monitoring the situation and supporting its members in the region in planning, preparing and responding to the events. To assist in working with the governments and publics, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement team had prepared a joint context analysis to serve as an information note to partners on the activities conducted, as well as the global position as a Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and definitions of key terms. At the same time the recent crisis has created an opportunity to reconsider whether more can be done, as well as to speak out in support of humanitarian action. The issue of irregular migration is complex and in most countries politically sensitive. There are no easy solutions but the expectation from donors and others, for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to be a partner in the debate is high. To read the Red Cross Red Crescent statement on the Anda-

Much has already been said about the lack of legislation and the weak protections afforded to migrant workers. Much has also been said about the risks and vulnerabilities they face. But I feel very strongly that we should also place an emphasis on two critical and often overlooked aspects of labour migration—dignity and respect."

Al Muhanadi, Secretary General of the Qatar Red Crescent Society



Preparedness is key to protection and resilience. Here Thai Red Cross practice 'sea search and rescue'. Photo credit: Siriporn Othavorn/Finnish Red Cross

man Sea crisis, please refer to the webpage, 'Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement commits support to migrants granted temporary shelter in Indonesia and Malaysia'.

Given the issue of irregular migration and that the impact of the Rakhine conflict is felt on countries other than Myanmar, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, together with concerned National Societies, is developing a regional plan of action to assist National Societies in preparing for and responding to this serious humanitarian need and fulfil its humanitarian mandate and role as auxiliary to public authorities, engaging a dialogue with respective government representatives and other key stakeholders.

The recent crisis also proved that children and the elderly are some of the most vulnerable groups that flee by boat. The journey, often long and strenuous – both physically and mentally –can have greater impacts on these already vulnerable groups. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is working with relevant countries in Southeast Asia following the recent Andaman Sea crisis, to build regional dialogue and co-operation to ensure that migrants' rights are protected.

#### **Migrant health**

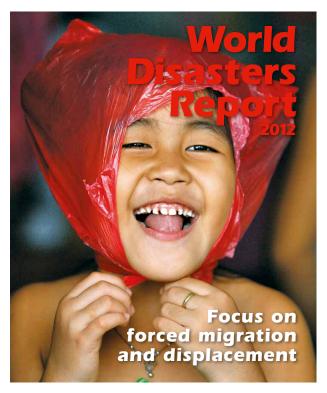
Migration can lead to negative health consequences, both for migrating populations, as well as leading to public health concerns through the spread of communicable diseases. On arrival in a receiving country, many will not know where or how to access good quality, safe medical care. Furthermore, access to public health care for migrants is dependable on national policies and the migrant's legal status in the host country. This could be particularly problematic in cases where a woman is pregnant and may require pre or post-natal care. Displacement, as a result of disasters, and subsequent living situations that can result in close confinement in IDP or refugee camps can exacerbate the spread of communicable diseases. Discrimination based on a person's health status such as HIV/AIDS can add to the potential risks of diseases spreading. It is important that services are available to migrants, that they are aware of their rights and migrating populations and host communities receive education to reduce stigma related to health issues such as HIV/AIDS.

Cross border cooperation: the Thai Government is currently rolling out a universal health insurance approach to extend coverage of health care to migrant populations from their neighboring countries – Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Thai Red Cross being members of the Ministry of Public Health national Health and Migration platform are committed to support and

contribute to this national strategy, ensuring that access to basic health services is extended to migrants. Undocumented migrants are currently not covered within this approach, so increased advocacy around the importance of targeting this group is also necessary to ensure all vulnerable groups are reached.

### Sexual and gender-based violence and migration

Violence prevention, mitigation and response are being addressed as part of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' work on migration. Sexual and gender-based violence is an important issue and area of concern when focusing on those most at risk. Although sexual and gender-based violence can affect women, men, boys and girls, one of the root causes of it is gender inequality and therefore disproportionality impacts women and girls. Experiences of sexual and gender-based violence may cause a person to migrate and we also know that the prevalence of such violence increases in the aftermath of an emergency such as a natural disaster. As people move to displaced camps this can create an insecure environment for women and girls. Poor lighting on route to, and lack of security at water and sanitation facilities (e.g. locks on latrine doors) or on shelters, can increase the risk of violence. During their migration journey, women and girls are also at risk of sexual violence.



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'Sexual and gender-based violence' (SGBV) is an 'umbrella term' for any harmful act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a woman, man, girl or boy on the basis of their gender. Sexual and gender-based violence is a result of gender inequality and abuse of power. It includes (but is not limited to): sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, forced or early marriage, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation and abuse, and systematic denial of resources, opportunities and services.

#### Youth

Throughout its work on migration, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' Southeast Asia Regional Delegation will continue to work closely with, and harness the capacity of its youth and volunteers to become leaders and advocates for social inclusion approaches and for the integration of gender and violence prevention in addressing migrants' rights and protection. A particular focus of the Southeast Asia Youth Network (SEAYN) will be placed on engaging and educating young people, increasing the voice of young people in improving awareness of the risks migrants face at all stages of their journey, and vulnerabilities within host societies; implementing the "Youth as Agent of Behavioural Change" (YABC) initiative which aims to empower young people to help change mindsets, attitudes and behaviours within their local communities; strengthening youth regional national society networks and cooperation with local organizations working with and for youth, including engagement and participation of young migrants.

### Protecting humanity is our collective responsibility

The Southeast Asia Regional Delegation supports the roll out of the test phase of the Global Campaign on Migration that will see an official launch in September 2015. Under the overarching call against indifference and protection of migrants, a customized media package to reflect regional dimensions of migration and pertinent humanitarian challenges will be prepared and shared with National Societies for further dissemination to the public, partners and governments. For more information about the campaign and on how you can contribute please visit #ProtectHumanity.

The benefits that migrants can bring to the development of countries of origin and destination as well as towards the global development agenda at large should not be underestimated. However, this will not happen automatically, but only if provided with an enabling environment where migrants, regardless of their status, are treated with human dignity, equality and respect. For this reason, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will continue to push forward the agenda that puts protection of human rights, equality and sustainability at the core – the essential precondition for enabling migrants to become agents of change and development.



In engaging children and young people fleeing their homes, the Red Cross Red Crescent promotes a culture of empowering children and youth to take meaningful action and giving back to the communities. Photo credit: Yoshi Shimizu/IFRC

#### Looking ahead

#### Extending humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy

- Supporting the roll out of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' Global Campaign on Migration by adapting it to the context and priorities of Southeast Asia.
- Building the confidence and capacity of National Societies so they can position themselves to voice migrant's concerns by advocating at the local and regional level for the improvement of migrants' rights and conditions.
- Promoting positive perceptions of migrants in host communities and a culture of non-violence and peace through awareness raising campaigns and continued regional dialogue.
- Engaging with local authorities in 'sending' and 'receiving' countries and encouraging governments to provide essential services such as pre-departure seminars and reintegration support.

#### Developing regional collaboration / strategic partnerships

- Coordinating roundtable dialogue with National Societies from Southeast Asia, governments, non-government
  organisations and civil society groups to enhance coordinated regional action and mutual cooperation at the
  local and regional level.
- Strengthening existing and building new partnerships with civil society organisations, non-government organisations, migrant networks and youth based organisations and other partners within and outside the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

### Strengthening community preparedness through engagement with Red Cross Red Crescent and Youth and Volunteer Networks

- Working with the youth and volunteers in their preparedness and response to migration, whilst ensuring that they are prepared to work with the specific needs related with vulnerable migrant groups.
- Educating youth to understand the needs of vulnerable migrant populations, so that they can have a strong voice in improving awareness of the risks migrants face and their vulnerabilities within host societies.
- Empowering youth to become agents of change within their communities through peer-to-peer learning and promoting an environment of non-violence and peace.
- Engaging youth directly with migrant communities. The youth and volunteers have a unique positioning being a part of their communities which instils trust with those they work with.

**Conducting relief efforts:** through the delivery of food and non-food items; the provision of humanitarian services; restoring family links; health education and psychosocial support programs.

**Harnessing the capacity of new technologies:** as these can help us reach out to those most at-risk groups through social media, positive messaging and behavior changes.

**Increasing migration-related research:** with a specific focus on particularly vulnerable migrant groups such as women, girls and ethnic minorities.

#### Links for further information

- http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/ migration/
- https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/ migration/
- https://www.ifrc.org/what-we-do/mi gration/rights-ofmigrants-in-action/
- http://www.ifrc.org/dohadialogue
- https://sites.google.com/site/drrtool sinsoutheastasia/migration
- http://apmigration.ilo.org/

#### References

- Resolution 1 adopted at the 31st International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent
- IFRC Migration Policy
- IFRC Migration Policy Brief
- Red Cross Red Crescent Dialogue on Migration 15-17 June 2014: Desired Outcomes, Next Steps and Commitments
- Red Cross Red Crescent Doha Dialogue Magazine
- Southeast Asia Leadership Meeting: Commitments 2015
- The Rights of Migrants in Action
- The European Commission's
   Directorate-General for International
   Cooperation and Development
   (DG DEVCO)

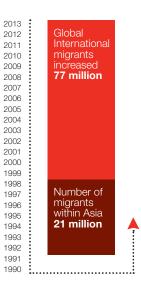
# Statistics on Labor Migration within the Asia-Pacific Region

### **Global Profile of Labor Migration**

 In 2013, there were
 232 million international migrants world-wide<sup>1</sup>



 From 1990 to 2013, globally the number of international migrants increased by over 77 million; within Asia the number of migrants rose by 21 million<sup>2</sup>



 In 2013, women comprised
 48 per cent of all international migrants
 worldwide<sup>3</sup>



• Of all the international migrants,

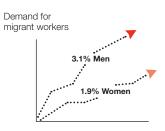
women represent 83 per cent of the 52-100 million domestic workers worldwide<sup>4</sup>



• In 2013, 58 per cent of all migrants in Asia were men<sup>5</sup>



The annual increase in the number
 of male migrants in Asia (3.1 per cent) is greater than
 the number of female migrants (1.9 per cent). The increase
 in male migrants in Asia was fuelled by the strong demand
 for migrant workers in the oil-producing countries
 in Western Asia.



- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, International Migration Report 2013). Of those, over 105 million were labour migrants (ILO).
- (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, International Migration Report 2013).
- (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, International Migration Report 2013).
- 4 (ILO
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, International Migration Report 2013)
- 6 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, International Migration Report 2013)

## The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**Humanity** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other is worldwide.



For further information, please contact:

Anne E. LECLERC Head of Delegation, IFRC Southeast Asia Regional Delegation Anne.Leclerc@ifrc.org Elena NYANENKOVA
Senior Migration Officer, IFRC Southeast Asia Regional Delegation Elena.Nyanenkova@ifrc.org









