INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

The total refugee stock including asylum seekers to the Asia/Pacific area has decreased from 3.9 million in 1990 to 2.6 million in 2017 – data do not account for the recent Rohingya crisis with refugee flows from Myanmar to Bangladesh and India. Over the same period the number of refugees in OECD countries has more than tripled to 7.3 million (Figure 3.10). The decline of the number of refugees in Pakistan (1.9 million) contributed to the overall decline in the refugee stock in the Asia/Pacific region. By contrast, the number of refugees increased by more than 100 000 in India and more than 10 000 in China, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal and Thailand.

The share of migrant flows from the Asia/Pacific to OECD countries among total inflows to the OECD (around 27%) is largely unchanged, even though the absolute number has doubled over the 2000 to 2016 period (Figure 3.11). More than half of the immigrants to the OECD came from China, India, and Viet Nam in 2016. In 2017, migrants from the Asia/Pacific region have relatively high employment rate, for example in Canada (72.8%), EU 28 (64.69%), and the United States (69.35%), but the situation differs sharply across migrant groups and countries of origin within the region (OECD, 2015; forthcoming). Women are less likely to be employed than men, and employment rates of migrants increase significantly with level of educational attainment (OECD, 2015).

Migration remittance flows to Asia and the Pacific have continuously increased since 2000, except during the Great Recession (2008/9). Among all remittances sent to Asian/Pacific countries in 2017, approximately two/ thirds are destined for India (26%), China (24%), and the Philippines (21%) (Figure 3.12). Remittances sent by Asian/Pacific migrants to their countries of origin amounted to USD 267 billion in 2017, accounting for more than one third of all global remittance flows (USD 613 billion). Remittances constitute a significant share of gross domestic product in some of the countries of origin, as for example in the Kyrgyz Republic (33%), Nepal (28%), Tajikistan (31%) and Tonga (34%).

Definition and measurement
An asylum seeker is someone who applies for international protection, but whose claim has not been definitely evaluated. National asylum systems may decide which asylum seekers actually qualify for international protection. Those judged through paper procedures not to be refugees, nor to be in need of any other form of international protection, can be sent back to their home countries. The total refugee stock, used for measure this indicator, includes asylum seekers to the Asia/Pacific region. Data on the total refugee stock (including asylum seekers) are from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017).

Immigrant flows from the Asia/Pacific to the OECD countries measures the number of people move to the OECD from the Asia/Pacific countries each year. Data on this indicator are from OECD International Migration Database. A remittance is a transfer of money by a foreign work to an individual in his or her country of origin. Data on migrant remittance inflows in current (nominal) USD are from the World Bank Migration and Remittance Data (Figure 3.12).

Further reading
Figure 3.10. The total number of refugee stock (including asylum seekers) declined in Asia/Pacific though OECD countries recorded an unprecedented number of 7.3 million

Estimated refugee stock (including asylum seekers) in OECD, Asia/Pacific, and Pakistan

Note: The Asia/Pacific (sum) does not include Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Korea DPR, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Tonga as well as Viet Nam for 2016 and 2017 due to the lack of data.

Figure 3.11. Migrant flows from the Asia/Pacific to the OECD almost doubled after 2000

Inflows of foreign population by nationality (million)

Note: 33 Asia/Pacific countries are included. Korea DPR, Mongolia, Timor-Lester are excluded.
Source: Inflows of foreign population by nationality, OECD International Migration Database.

Figure 3.12. Approximately two thirds of migration remittance flows in Asia/Pacific are destined to India, China, and Philippines after 2006

Migrant remittance inflows to Asia/Pacific economies (USD billion)

Note: 2017 data are estimates.