



Expert Group Meeting in Celebration of the 30th anniversary of the International Year of Family, 2024

28-29 February 2024

VENUE

The Everly Hotel, Putrajaya
Kuala Lumpur

THEME

**Families and Megatrends
Interlinkages between migration, urbanization, new technologies,
demographic trends and climate change**

CONCEPT NOTE

Migration and Urbanization

Migration represents one of the most important social phenomena of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. International migration and internal migration are two fundamental categories that encompass the movement of individuals across geographical boundaries. While both terms refer to the relocation of people, they differ in the scale and nature of the migration process.

International migration involves the movement of individuals across national borders, resulting in a change in citizenship. This type of migration can be motivated by a variety of factors, including economic opportunities, political stability, family reunification, or the pursuit of educational or professional advancements. International migration can be further categorized as voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary migration occurs when individuals choose to relocate for personal reasons, while involuntary migration is often the result of conflict, persecution, or natural disasters.

Internal migration, on the other hand, refers to the movement of individuals within the boundaries of a single country. This type of migration can be driven by factors such as rural-urban migration, urban sprawl, or the pursuit of better employment opportunities or educational facilities. Internal migration can also be influenced by government policies, regional economic disparities, and individual aspirations for a better quality of life.

The distinction between international and internal migration is significant for understanding the demographic patterns, economic dynamics, and social implications of population movements. International migration has a profound impact on both sending and receiving countries, influencing labor markets, economic development, and cultural exchange. Internal migration, while primarily affecting the distribution of population within a country, can also lead to urban growth, regional disparities, and the transformation of rural and urban landscapes.

Closely linked with migration is the rapid urbanization that is occurring in many parts of the world and is changing family structures. As migrants leave rural areas seeking opportunities in cities, urban areas are growing at an exponential pace. (1)

Both trends have a profound impact on family life, family relationships, and family practices:

- *Changes in family structures*, such as smaller households and fewer multigenerational families — as people move to cities or other countries, they may leave behind extended family members and rely more on nuclear families or chosen families for support;
- *Cities can provide new economic opportunities for families*, such as higher-paying jobs or access to better education and healthcare, but they can also create economic challenges, such as higher living costs or difficulty finding work in the new location, overcrowded cities, slums, burden on infrastructure, etc.
- *Disruption of social support networks for families*, as they may be separated from extended family members, friends, and other support systems, while they may build new networks in the new location, such as through work or community organizations.
- *Adaptation to new cultural norms and practices*, which can be challenging, like learning a new language, adjusting to new food and customs, and navigating new social hierarchies.

The impact can be especially significant for the most vulnerable as children, older persons and persons with disability, particularly if they are forced to move due to conflict or displacement, as

they may experience trauma, disrupted education, lack of mobility and other challenges that can affect their well-being and development.

Young people can also be heavily affected in terms of employment, housing and family formation. In that sense, it is now more important than ever to bear in mind that integration is an investment. (4-2)

Asia has been experiencing rapid urbanization and migration in recent decades. This has led to significant changes in the social, economic, and cultural landscape of the region. Migration from Asia to Northern America and Europe drove much of the increase in the number of Asian migrants outside the region, reaching a total of more than 46 million extra-regional migrants in 2020. (5-3)

Many migrant workers leave their families behind and only return home for brief visits. This has led to the development of new family structures and relationships, with grandparents often taking on a more prominent role in the upbringing of children.

In reply to these challenges, one of the biggest challenges faced by Asian cities is the need to provide adequate infrastructure and services to accommodate the growing urban population. This includes building new housing, transportation systems, and social services such as healthcare and education.

Policies and programs that support migration and well-planned and well-managed sustainable urbanization are closely related to the successful realization of the United Nations Agenda 2030, as localized by the New Urban Agenda. SDG 11 emphasizes the need for inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities. Ensuring that families have access to adequate housing, basic services, and infrastructure, and that they are not left behind in the process of urbanization, is crucial for achieving it, and that is the policy framework of the New Urban Agenda.

Overall, the challenges posed by urbanization and migration in Asia are complex and require a coordinated effort by governments, civil society organizations, and individuals to address them effectively.

Interlinkages

Migration and urbanization are closely linked to climate change but the interlinkages between these megatrends have not been well researched or explored. It is imperative to assess the impact of climate change on families as a driver of both migration and urbanization. As the planet warms, extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and wildfires are becoming more frequent and severe. These events are displacing people from their homes and livelihoods, forcing them to migrate in search of safety and opportunity. In addition, climate change is also leading to sea level rise, which is inundating coastal communities and forcing people to relocate to higher ground.

Urbanization is also being driven by climate change. As people migrate from rural areas to cities, they are putting a strain on urban infrastructure and resources. This can lead to problems such as overcrowding, slums, and poverty. Thus, the impact of urbanization and migration makes cities more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change with rapid urban growth, increased pollution, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and extreme weather events.

Unsustainable urbanization exacerbates climate change and its negative impacts on families while sustainable urbanization is imperative for managing climate change and technological solutions are of major importance. In this regard, adaptation technologies have the potential to reduce the impact of climate change on families and contribute to family well-being.

New technologies have played a significant role in shaping family dynamics regarding the challenges faced by migrants in urban environments. The rise of social media platforms, video conferencing tools, messaging apps and online remittance services, and other digital platforms has made it easier for families to stay connected despite physical distance. However, it has also introduced new challenges, such as the potential for social isolation and the impact of technology on family relationships.

Migration and urbanization have also impacted demographics. Family reunification policies have an impact on family relations, as they establish the terms under which migrants and their family members are allowed to enter and settle in destination countries. There is a close relationship between policies, migratory trajectories and transnational families, with such regulations being assessed by families when a member wishes to migrate and make decisions about migration. These policies may facilitate or restrict migratory flows and the conditions under which they occur. Thus, they can either contribute to family well-being or expose families to the processes of exclusion and risk. (2-4)

The United Nations Division for Inclusive Social Development “supports the New Urban Agenda and advocates for including an intergenerational perspective in designing family-friendly cities. Children and youth need secure urban environments to go to school safely and access safe

playgrounds and recreation opportunities, including sports facilities. All generations, including older persons and young people, as well as persons with disabilities and families with children, need accessible means of transportation and mobility. New intergenerational approaches to urban planning have been gaining ground, with city planners, backed by local communities, designing intergenerational sites, including schools and retirement homes built close to each other, so that generations can interact and feel part of a larger community.” (3-5)

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Underline the impact of migration on transforming family structures.
2. Highlight the New Urban Agenda and explore ways to achieve inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities.
3. Analyze strategies for optimizing the benefits of technology while minimizing its drawbacks on family relationships.
4. Explore the policy lessons learned from Asia that can be applied globally, and the potential contributions of global experiences to the Asian context.
5. Explore the interlinkages between migration, urbanization, new technologies and climate change.

REFERENCES

- (1) Bahira Sherif Trask, Migration, Urbanization, and the Family Dimension (May 2022) Background paper prepared for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Division for Inclusive Social Development, Focal Point on the Family <https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2022/04/Migration-Urbanization-and-the-Family-Dimension-by-Bahira-Trask.pdf>
- (2) OECD, What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrants and their children? (2020) <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/what-is-the-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-immigrants-and-their-children-e7cbb7de/>
- (3) IOM, World Migration Report 2022 <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2022-interactive/>

(4) Report of the Secretary-General A/78/61-E/2023/7 on Preparations for and observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

<https://undocs.org/A/78/61-E/2023/7>

(5) Daniela Bas (Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations), Urbanization and Families (13 May 2022)

<https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/urbanization-and-families>

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[Resolution of the UN General Assembly](#)

[Report of the Secretary-General](#)

[UN Website](#)

[EGM Cairo \(June 2022\)](#)

AGENDA

<u>Wednesday, February 28th, 2024</u>	<u>Thursday, February 29th, 2024</u>
<p>8:30 Opening Session Speakers: Renata Kaczmarek Focal Point of the Family, UN DESA Mr. Abdul Shukur Abdullah Director General of LPPKN Dr. Khalid Al Naama Director of Family Policy and Research, DIFI Dr. Ignacio Socias Director of International Relations, IFFD Introduction of participants</p> <p>9:00 Session 1: Interlinkages between migration, urbanization, new technologies, demographic trends and climate change Moderator: Ignacio Socias</p> <p>Meejung Chin (South Korea) Rumaya Juhari (Malaysia)</p>	<p>8:30 Session 5: New technologies and climate change: challenges and opportunities Moderator: Renata Kaczmarek</p> <p>Narimah Awin (Malaysia) Jonghyo Park (South Korea)</p> <p>10:00 Coffee Break</p> <p>10:30</p> <p>Session 6: Closing Session</p> <p>Recommendations Moderator: Dana Alkahlout</p> <p>12:00 End</p>

<p>10:30 Coffee Break</p> <p>11:00 Session 2: Socio-economic challenges for migrant families Moderator: Renata Kaczmarska</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Bhubate Samutachak (Thailand) Rokuro Tabuchi (Japan)</p> <p>12:30 Lunch</p> <p>2:00: Session 3: Transnational migration and displacement Moderator: Dana Alkahlout</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Ki-Soo Eun (South Korea) Ram Babu Bhagat (India)</p> <p>3.30 Session 4: Housing and Urban Development Moderator: Dr. Khalid Al Naama</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Sunil Babu Shrestha (Nepal) Lishuang Chen (China)</p> <p>5:00 End</p>	
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PUBLIC FORUM

2:30 -2:40 pm:

**Preparations and Celebration For The
Thirtieth Anniversary Of The International Year Of The Family
(<https://social.desa.un.org/issues/family/news/iyf2024>)**

**Renata Kaczmarska
Focal Point on the Family**

**Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD)
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)**

2:40 – 2:50 pm:

Civil Society Declaration

(<https://familyperspective.org/2023/02/23/civil-society-declaration-30th-anniversary-of-the-international-year-of-the-family/>)

Dr. Ignacio Socias

Director of International Relations

International Federation for Family Development

Theme : Families and Megatrends

**Interlinkages between migration, urbanization, new technology,
demographic trends and climate change**

Moderator: Dana Alkahlout (DIFI)

2:50 – 3:10 pm:

Speaker 1: Demographic Trends and Families

Prof. Ki-Soo Eun

Professor of Sociology and Demography

Director, Korean Studies Major

Director, Center for Transnational Migration and Social Inclusion <https://ctms.or.kr/en/>

Graduate School of International Studies

Seoul National University

Seoul, Korea

3:10 – 3:30pm

Speaker 3: Climate Change and Families

Mr. Muhammad Ridzwan bin Ali

Climate Change Division

Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Malaysia

3:30 – 3:50 pm

Speaker 4: Technological Change and Families:

Dr. Khalid Al Naama

Director of Family Policy and Research

Doha International Family Institute, Qatar

3:50 – 4:20 pm

Q&A session

4.20 – onwards:

Closing speech by:

YB Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri

Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia

PARTICIPANTS:

EXPERTS

1. Prof. Meejung Chin, *Seoul National University*, **South Korea**
2. Assoc. Prof. Bhubate Samutachak, Institute for Population and Social Research, *Mahidol University*, **Thailand**
3. Prof. Ki-Soo Eun, *Seoul National University*, **South Korea**
4. Prof. Narimah Awin, *UNFPA Malaysia Country Office*, **Malaysia**
5. Prof. Sunil Babu Shrestha, *Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST)*, **Nepal**
6. Prof. Rokuro Tabuchi, *Sophia University*, **Japan**
7. Prof. Rumaya Juhari, *University Putra Malaysia*, **Malaysia**

PRACTITIONERS

1. Mr. Jong-ik Lee, *Blue Tree Foundation*, **South Korea**
2. Mrs. Lishuang Chen, *China Great Wall Society*, **China**

Recommendations

Demographic Change

- Formulate policies and implement programs to support family formation and cohesion, including enhanced childcare support, reduction of working hours, implementation of flexible working arrangements and parenting education programs.
- Raise awareness of the significance and consequences of fertility decline as a serious future threat in Asian countries, and take necessary measures.

- Establish financial assistance, infrastructure support, and mechanisms to enable families to work effectively in their local contexts, to enhance grassroots economies in localities to promote family integration.
- Recognize the impact of population ageing on the family and take appropriate measures.

Technological Change

- Devise programs that educate older persons on digital literacy and promote active ageing in the context of traditional skills, technology and cultural heritage.
- Develop innovative, practical products, services and solutions that can support older persons in their daily activities, while considering cultural sensitivities and realities.
- Increase accessibility to the benefits of technology, to promote family well-being, while ensuring technological developments are based on cost-benefit analysis.
- Call for the development and spread of preventive education not only in cities, but also across regions, while taking into consideration partnerships between schools, NGOs, private sector, governmental and non-governmental organizations, towards international cooperation for technology-induced digital crime vigilance.
- Establish a fund aimed at providing underprivileged older persons with access to technologies.

Urbanization

- Introduce new housing and rental policies that address the housing needs of low-income individuals and marginalized communities, while considering the demographic shift towards an ageing society, housing for older persons s.
- Prioritize the integration of innovation and technology in urban development and housing. This involves exploring smart city concepts, adopting Green Building practices backed with innovative technology, leveraging digital solutions for improved service delivery, and implementing innovative construction techniques.
- Develop and enhance local technology for housing and urban development and utilizing local building materials. This can involve integrating traditional building practices with modern techniques, promoting sustainable materials, and incorporating local knowledge and expertise.

International Migration

- Introduce incentives to discourage the disintegration of family members by advocating for quality education in all localities and spreading economic and industrial development. This strategic approach seeks to alleviate population concentration in a few megacities, addressing the migration of the working-age population from their home provinces and

regions. This, in turn, aims to diminish the necessity of sending children to larger urban centers for higher education.

- Embrace family-friendly approaches, to encourage family members to reside together and provide mutual support, by applying governmental measures and policies, spanning all sectors that underscore the growing diversity within society.
- Incorporate designs that foster a multi-generation-friendly environment, ensuring inclusivity and not leaving any vulnerable groups, such as children and older persons marginalized.
- Strengthen economic incentives and encourage investment and reform of the tax system to alleviate the excessive concentration of population in cities, revitalize rural areas and enhancing the attractiveness of local cities and depopulated areas, by providing support for employment, entrepreneurship, housing allowances, higher child allowances, and support for educational expenses.
- Strengthen connections between urban and rural areas, facilitating mechanisms for urban residents to support rural communities through short-term stays and financial aid.
- Implement flexible educational formats at public universities, allowing students to study while residing in underpopulated areas and improve the appeal of schools in underpopulated areas by increasing teacher staffing and developing engaging curricula.
- Establish research centers and specialized institutions to facilitate research, innovation, and the development of appropriate technology for housing and urban development, while taking into consideration collaboration between governmental, academic and research institutions.

Climate Change

- Prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive urban planning policies that account for rapid urbanization and population growth. This involves establishing zoning regulations, integrating risk-sensitive land use planning considering climate change and natural disaster risks, and adopting spatial development strategies to promote sustainable, green, smart, inclusive, and resilient development. Encompass a range of initiatives, including the establishment of public rental housing schemes, organized rental housing systems, Green Building practices, Cooperative Housing projects, and mass affordable housing initiatives. These initiatives will cater to the diverse needs of the population and ensure access to decent housing for all families.
- Develop a holistic approach that integrates urban agriculture, environmental conservation, and sustainable development, while prioritizing the development of family-friendly cities to promote citizen happiness and enable citizen-centered urban development, while prioritizing the provision of basic amenities and services within housing projects, to ensure that residents have access to essential facilities such as water, electricity, sanitation, and transportation, creating livable conditions in housing developments.

- Expand prevention education to small cities (rural and mountainous areas) every year, rather than concentrating on large cities including operating prevention education from early childhood (infants and lower elementary grades) in consideration of the fact that the age of violence experience is gradually becoming younger.
- Share success stories to find sustainable solutions and to bring them to the international community for global cooperation through conferences, forums etc. where experts from international organizations, governments, corporations, civil society, and youth can share their ideas on preventing cyberbullying.
- Reduce carbon emissions and environmental footprint by making the RRR as a way of life - (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) while noting the direct role that the family plays in this.
- Educate and guide family members to be alert in dealing with anticipated future disasters, which are expected to arise in diverse forms and occur more frequently, through disseminating information across various platforms, and making necessary preparations including the availability of necessary instruments.