



វិទ្យាស្ថានសភាកម្ពុជា
PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTE OF CAMBODIA

RESEARCH PAPER

The Senate Commission 8

Migration, Human Trafficking Prevention and Sexual Exploitation

July 2017

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1. Introduction

Migration, human trafficking and sexual exploitation remain significant social issues in Cambodia. Over the past 10 years, Cambodia has experienced an increased level of economic internal migration and external migration to other countries, especially to Thailand, South Korea and Malaysia. This research was prepared in response to the request from Senate Commission 8 representatives on 18 July 2017, regarding the issue of migration and human trafficking. The paper serves as the background paper, delivering information and contextual analysis regarding the mentioned issues for the delegation. Specifically, this paper aims to focus on the extent of, and the reasons for, external migration, human trafficking and sexual exploitation and what should be done to lessen this problem. The review was structured to focus on the following questions:

- i. What are the situation and reasons for migration, human trafficking and sexual exploitation?
- ii. What should be done to address the challenges, especially regarding prevention, policies and law enforcement?
- iii. What could be a short questionnaire for use when studying migration, human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Cambodia?

The findings are mainly derived from desk review of existing research papers, government documents and analysis of secondary data and information available from online access. The paper includes two sets of guided questions for the issues as required by the client during the meeting. These questions were prepared for the committee for their discussions with relevant stakeholders during their mission.

2. Situation of Migration in Cambodia

Migration is a global issue driven mainly by globalization, social, political and economic development.[1] Cambodia is no stranger to this phenomenon. Before the 1990s, migration was mainly the choice made by many to escape war. Once peace had been fully restored, an increasing number of people have been migrating to other countries for economic reasons.

Cambodia has a population of 14.9 million people with 1.3 per cent population growth rate. The labor force numbers about 7 million people. [2] This demographic means that the country has been struggling to provide adequate employment opportunities for its young and growing population.

Estimates suggest that 300,000 young people enter the Cambodian labor market every year, many of whom are unskilled. Garment factories – the main engine of the industrial sector – absorbs about 250,000 workers. This means that the majority of working age Cambodians are working in other sectors, particularly in agriculture. The government faces tremendous challenges in providing these young Cambodians with the skills required to enter the labor market. [3] This clearly indicates the skills mismatch in the Cambodian economy that prompts people to migrate to search for jobs elsewhere. [4]

Intra-country migrations have been concentrated within the areas along Cambodia's border with Thailand and Vietnam [5]. Other literature suggests that migrants come mainly from Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Kampong Cham, Banteay Meanchey and Pursat provinces. [4] With a decreasing birthrate, a strong economy, and a need for labor, Thailand has been the most attractive destination for young Cambodian cross-border migrants. [5] According to the statistics provided by the Ministry of Labor, by the end of 2016 the total number of migrant workers in Thailand reached 1,056,358 (including 310,000 undocumented migrants). South Korea emerged as the second place for Cambodian migrants due to the higher wages on offer. There are currently around 44,230 workers in that country. The number of Cambodian migrant workers in Malaysia was 1,776 in 2005, a number that increased tenfold within five years, and in 2016, the figure stood at 46,541. An estimated 3,897 Cambodia migrants were in Japan and only several hundred in Singapore. [6]

In the past decade, most of those who migrated to Thailand were “irregular” migrants. Irregular migration could be defined as the “illegal movement of people to work in another country without authorization.” [4] The same study highlighted the significant difference in socio-economic characteristics between regular and irregular migrants. For instance, the latter tend to be involved in jobs for which no skills are required, and they have a lower education status, consumption expenditure, and assets. [4] Those who migrate irregularly or are “undocumented” are found to be more vulnerable than those who migrate with proper documents (section 3.2 below).

2.1 Causes of Migration

The causes of migration are mixed and have been driven by both “pull” and “push” factors. Push factors can be simply understood in terms of the conditions that prompt people's decisions to move to other places in search of better livelihoods. These include lack of employment opportunities, poor

social services, household or covariant shocks¹, and poverty. Pull factors refer to the conditions that attract people from other places to settle, hoping to improve their living conditions. Those factors include availability of employment opportunities, richness of natural resources, good social services, and peace and stability. [1]. In Cambodia, there are two factors that are mainly responsible for migration.

Escaping poverty in search of better livelihoods and higher income is a fundamental reason for migration. The studies that track the pattern of migration in Cambodia confirm that the most important push factor for migration among Cambodians is the lack of jobs in their communities and low wages. This was reported by more than 70 percent of returned migrants who were interviewed. [7] The minimum wage in Cambodia was reported to be between USD 2.5 and USD 8 per day. In Thailand, the minimum wage is set around THB 300 (about USD 10) and that was among the key “pull” factors.

Studies have consistently found that indebtedness was also among the reasons why people choose to migrate. [5, 7] Lack of skills that make it difficult for people to find jobs in the country also prompted them to migrate to work temporally or even long-term in Thailand. [7] Lack of productive land was also one of the significant “push” factors that drive people out of their community to migrate for work elsewhere. [8] This situation reflects the increasing number of landless among the rural poor. [9] Other studies have highlighted additional associated causes, such as crop failure, that encourage people to migrate out of their communities.

Some migrants who choose to migrate illegally or without documentation, especially to neighboring Thailand, do so because of the high cost and lengthy process of applying for the relevant documents (particularly passports). [8] Migrating legally to Thailand costs about USD 747 which is about five times higher compared with illegal migration, and in most cases the migrant needs to borrow money to cover the cost. [10] Education levels have no correlation with the decision whether or not to choose legal migration. [7]

2.2 Impacts of Migration

The impacts of migration are positive and negative, depending on the nature of the migration, and particularly on the type of job involved, the location and the legal status of the migrant workers themselves. [1, 4, 5] Different outcomes also derive from the migrant's choice in terms of the

¹ Covariant shocks are ones that affect people at same time.

middle men who acquire jobs on their behalf. [5] Migration with the assistance of a licensed broker is likely to result in a higher income for migrants in Thailand [7].

Looking at the positive side, migration has a huge impact on improving household wellbeing. Different sources of literature reveal different scales of remittance sent back to Cambodia by migrant workers. The remittances from migrant workers have increased sharply. They accounted for about USD 200 million, or 3.23 percent of the GDP, in 2005. However, the latest statistics from the Ministry of Labor indicate that the value of remittances reached approximately USD 1.7 billion in 2016, and that it could be higher given the unrecorded proportion from undocumented migrants. [6] The massive scale of migration supports findings that claim a link between migration, poverty reduction and the improvement of the wellbeing of migrant households. [4, 5, 10, 11, 12] Migration also has a positive relationship with education attainment, although the dropout rates were higher compared with those of non-migrant families. This suggests that income from migration contributes to the support of children's education. [13]

The darker side of migration can be seen in terms of vulnerability, abuse and exploitation, along with poor living conditions. Several studies have confirmed that most migrant workers are involved in 3Ds jobs (i.e. they are Dirty, Dangerous and Difficult (or Demeaning)). [4, 7, 14] In a survey conducted with returned migrants from Thailand, about 20 percent reported being abused. [7] Migrant workers, particularly in the fisheries sector, reported living in poor conditions that were overcrowded and unhygienic and that they were exposed to violence and drug use. [7] The undocumented migrant workers face very limited access to health services, and constantly try to avoid being caught and deported. In addition, they face greater challenges than those with documents. They are more likely to be deported back to the countries from which they have come. For example, in 2014 about 693,630 Cambodian migrants, together with 42,395 dependents, left Thailand fearing arrest after there had been a change in the political landscape in the country. [2] With the absence of their parents, children of migrant families face a higher incidence of injury and illness and are more likely to be malnourished. [13] Another disadvantage of migration is the loss of labor, hampering farming and other economic activities, in the community of origin.

2.3 Policy Framework and Mitigation Measures

The policies on labor migration have evolved over time. The general aim has been to manage, protect and empower Cambodian migrant workers. The

first policy document was set out in the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Labor covering the years 2009 to 2012. The focus of this policy was on three issues: (1) Improving the management services for Cambodian migrant workers outside the country through private companies; (2) Establishing a work permit systems in Cambodia; and (3) Providing measures to protect migrant workers. [4] Later, the existing policy was updated in the Labor Migration Policy 2015-2018 – the first policy that put the main focus on addressing migration issues for Cambodian migrant workers. The policy focused on the objective of effectively governing and protecting migrant workers and on enhancing the impact of migration. The policy was designed in a way that was coherent with the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), by analyzing the current pattern of labor migration in Cambodia and the demographic shift, as well as national and regional development. [3]

Apart from the policy framework, the rights of migrant workers have also been protected by a number of international and national legal instruments including various sub-decrees, Prakas, Bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with host countries including Thailand, Malaysia and South Korea, and international conventions. These legal instruments have been put in place to support and protect migrant workers. There have, however, been no comprehensive studies looking at how these legal mechanisms have been implemented and enforced.

Addressing migration issues and enhancing positive outcomes require a complex understanding of the issues, good coordination among actors and institutions, as well as a sound policy framework. A number of options have been mentioned in migration studies in Cambodia. This paper highlights a few of the most important:

- Any measure to minimize the cost of documentation for poor migrants will have a direct, positive impact on them, promoting legal migration, and giving them the chance of better access to good conditions, better paid jobs, and, most importantly, easier access to legal protection and social services. [8]
- Efforts should be made to disseminate information about safe migration through an education campaign to communities. This will also contribute to increasing awareness about the risk of illegal migration and to enhance protection. This can be done through local government, particularly commune councils and provincial resource centers. [7]
- Chronic poverty, lack of employment opportunities, lack of skills, etc. are the fundamental reasons for migration. This indicates a strong link between the level of development in the communities of origin and migration. Although it is still hypothetical, it is very likely that fostering development in the community, enhancing agricultural productivity and markets, creating jobs, improving access to social services and the

provision of skills would help to reduce migration and mitigate the risks it presents. [4]

2.4 Key questions for a questionnaire

Specific questions to follow up in terms of progress in migration can include:

- What types of job(s) are migrant workers involved in? How did migrant workers find these jobs? Why do migrant workers choose these jobs? Please describe the conditions of the job.
- Who are more likely to migrate in the community and why?
- What are the main destinations for migration and why?
- What proportions of people migrate from this community?
- Under what conditions do migrant workers choose to migrate (with or without documents)? What are the reasons behind the choice?
- How much are migrant workers paid per day or month from their job? How much money are they able to send back home?
- What are the positive impacts of migration on their household livelihoods (e.g. rising income, more assets, higher consumption, better housing, stronger capability to cope with risk, livelihood diversification and others...)? How and why?
- How has migration affected the community? (Lack of labor for farming, etc.)
- What are the negative impacts of migration on individual and household livelihoods (being abused and exploited, increasing health risk, accidents, leaving children behind)? Why do these negative impacts happen? How did you cope with these kinds of risk(s) and incidence(s)?
- What are the factors that prevent people from choosing safe migration?
- What are the challenges they face during the migration process, during their stay and during their return?
- What types of assistance have been offered to migrant workers by the authorities and NGOs?
- What are their perceptions about the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the policies and law mechanism that have been mentioned? And what are the limitations?
- What should be done to mitigate the negative impacts of migration? Please prioritize three options.

3. Human trafficking and sexual exploitation

3.1 General situation relating to human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Cambodia

Cambodia is still a source, transit and destination for human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Despite the significant efforts of the government to eliminate human trafficking in order to move the country from the Tier 2 Watch List in 2016, Cambodia still lags behind other countries.[15] Human trafficking and sexual exploitation are considered to be crimes and a type of modern slavery² because they involve the use of force, threats, violence, coercion and the abuse of power against human beings. [16] No specific data was found to show how many Cambodians are currently suffering from human trafficking and sexual exploitation as the information often intersects with forced labor and migration. However, the Walk Free Foundation survey data in 2015 suggested that Cambodia had about 256,800 victims who were experiencing modern slavery including human trafficking, in which forced marriage accounted for 55,800 and forced labor for 201,000.[17] It is estimated that in 2015, modern slavery in Cambodia affected 1.648 percent of the total population, putting the country at the top of the list in Southeast Asia and the third highest in the world after North Korea and Uzbekistan (see Table 1 and 2).[16] The survey also defined human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power for the purpose of exploitation.

Table 1: Comparing percentages and absolute numbers of people experiencing modern slavery in Cambodia, North Korea and Uzbekistan

	North Korea	Uzbekistan	Cambodia
Percentage of total population	4.373	3.937	1.648
Absolute number	1,100,000	1,236,600	256,800

Source: Global Slavery Index 2016 [16]

² According to the Global Slavery Index in 2016, modern slavery refers to “situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, abuse of power or deception with treatment akin to a farm animal.”

Table 2: Comparing percentages and absolute numbers of people experiencing modern slavery in Cambodia and Southeast Asia

Countries	Absolute number	Percentage
Cambodia	256,800	1.648
Thailand	425,500	0.626
Lao PDR	20,000	0.295
Vietnam	139,300	0.152
Indonesia	736,100	0.286
Myanmar	515,100	0.956
Malaysia	128,800	0.425
Brunei	3,400	0.805
The Philippines	401,000	0.398
Singapore	9,200	0.165

Source: Global Slavery Index 2016 [16]

According to the Walk Free Foundation survey of 2015, the key sectors that drive modern slavery and human trafficking in Cambodia are manufacturing, farming, construction and domestic work.[17] However, the analysis of the International Justice Mission (IJM) in 2016 tended to show that fishing and domestic work were the sectors that led to human trafficking abroad.[18] The data of the National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) in 2016 confirmed the findings of the IJM, but added forced marriage as another sector.[19]

In 2016, NCCT data showed that 298 victims of human trafficking were repatriated to Cambodia, most of whom were from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and China.[19] This data tends to place those countries into the high-risk places for human trafficking as a warning in respect of migration in the region (see Table 3). The data of NCCT in 2016 also showed that most of the victims were illegal migrant workers who had migrated via irregular channels or unlicensed brokers, through their community members, relatives or external networks. Some victims were also reported to have been placed into forced labor and trafficking by licensed recruitment agents.[15, 19]

Table 3: The number of repatriated victims released from destination countries in 2016

Destination countries	Total	Fishing vessels	Domestic work	Marriage	General labor	Injury and death
Malaysia	100		63		37	
Indonesia	71	71				
China	63			42	21	
Thailand	43	13			30	18
Vietnam	15	6		9		
Somalia	4	4				
Taiwan	1		1			
Saudi Arabia	1	1				
Total	298	95	64	51	88	18

Source: National Committee for Counter Trafficking 2016. [19]

All provinces in Cambodia are sources of human trafficking as reported by previous studies and happens both inside and outside Cambodia. Trafficking within Cambodia is often for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation in respect of which young women have been transported to work in brothels, massage parlors or karaoke bars in some urban cities such as Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Poipet, Koh Kong or Siem Reap.[20] Sexual exploitation of street children, especially by tourists, has also been reported. The data of NCCT in 2016 showed that 524 businesses operating in Cambodia, had been targeted, of which 71 were convicted of human and sexual trafficking.[19]

Human trafficking outside of Cambodia is often in the form of: i) trafficking for marriage; ii) forced labor on fishing vessels and domestic work; and iii) forced begging.

Trafficking for marriage: Trafficking for marriage has happened to some Cambodian women who entered into a brokered marriage with Chinese, Korean or Taiwanese men. These women have sought a better life by marrying foreign men, but they have ended up being abused by their husbands or families-in-law and, in the worst scenario, they have been forced into prostitution. Some women have been promised a factory job, but have been deceived and forced into marriage against their will.[16] In 2016, Chinese authorities reported that about 7,000 Cambodian women had been married to Chinese men, but only 100 were reported to have done so legally.[21] The report of NCCT showed there were 1,541 legal marriages between Cambodians and foreigners in 2016.[19]

Forced labor on fishing vessels: Forced labor has become worse for migrant workers who are engaged in the fishing industry in countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Somalia, Vietnam and Taiwan. These migrant workers can be forced to work from 16 to 18 hours a day on fishing vessels with no way of escape. [22] A case study in Indonesia showed fishery workers were forced to work up to 20 hours a day.[23] Besides working long hours, workers had no days off, and did not receive enough food or salary. Sometimes they were abused by their captain.[22] There were also cases of injury or death from working on fishing vessels. According to the ILO Bangkok, from June to October 2014, more than 22,000 Cambodians had registered to work in the fishing industry in Thailand.[23]

Forced domestic labor: Forced domestic labor is another crime. Cambodian workers were reported to have been trafficked to Malaysia, the Middle East and Singapore to work as nannies, maids and carers. Even though they received pay three times higher than in Cambodia, these migrant workers suffered serious abuse, and were often reported to have mental problems upon returning home. In 2015, 8,000 Cambodian domestic workers were working in Malaysia.[24]

Forced begging: Cambodian children are reported to be trafficked for begging in neighboring countries like Thailand and Vietnam. In 2014, about 80 percent of child beggars in Thailand were Cambodian.[25]

Trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation: Women used to be considered as the sole victims in the sex industry, but recently boys and young men have also fallen into the victim category. Street children, especially boys, are often identified as the victims of sexual abuse by foreign nationals.[16] Young Vietnamese girls have also been reported to be trafficked to brothels in Cambodia. The data of NCCT showed that 298 victims of sex trafficking were rescued in Cambodia in 2016 and children and minors were among those victims.[19]

3.2 Reasons of human trafficking and sexual exploitation

Human trafficking and sexual exploitation occur for three main reasons. First, poverty is a root cause of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Findings showed that victims of human trafficking are often people who are poor, uneducated, intellectually or physically disabled or who lack security or life opportunities. The socio-economic imbalance places some groups in a more difficult situation than others. The traffickers often target these people and exploit their disadvantages. Children and women often fall into this category and become the victims of human trafficking.[15, 26]

Second, victims of human trafficking are often migrant workers, although this does not mean that migration necessarily leads to human trafficking.

Research showed that the factors that led migrant workers to become victims of human trafficking are: i) illegal migration; ii) deception of brokers or traffickers; iii) lack of information about the jobs and workplaces; and iv) lack of protection measures or support systems for migrant workers.[22, 26]

Third, human trafficking and sexual exploitation are a lucrative business and are operated based on the principles of supply and demand. When there is a demand, there are groups of brokers who make a profit by finding cheap labor to meet it. It is more likely that humans are trafficked to rich rather than poor places. [26] Curtailing the demand for human trafficking could minimize the risks associated with it.

3.3 Prevention, prosecution and protection

Since the 1990s, the Royal Government of Cambodia has put a lot of effort into combating human trafficking. The RGC has signed a number of international protocols³ and conventions⁴ and ratified laws⁵ against human trafficking. It has also signed bilateral agreements with several countries in the region, such as a bilateral agreement with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Royal Government of Thailand on cooperation to combat human trafficking. The government has also signed a multilateral MoU against Trafficking in Persons in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region and the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters among ASEAN Countries.[27]

In addition, Cambodia established a government body to be responsible for counter-trafficking activities. The National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) is the main government player responsible for law enforcement and the monitoring of the situation in terms of human trafficking. The NCCT is chaired by the Minister of Interior and has a structure that reaches down to the sub-national level.[28] It also has four Ministries⁶ as its members. The main activities of the NCCT include: i) developing national policies and international cooperation related to human trafficking; ii) preventing trafficking crimes by educating and raising awareness among migrants through the media, public forums, ICT and training; iii) prosecuting and convicting human trafficking offenders; and iv) providing protection for victims.[19]

³ The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.

⁴ The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; the Convention on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

⁵ The Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims, enacted in 2005; the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation, enacted in 2008; Juvenile Justice Law, enacted in 2016.

⁶ The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVT).

NGOs have also played important roles in addressing human trafficking in Cambodia, especially in respect of prevention and protection services. For example, Cambodia's Women's Crisis Center (CCWC) implemented safe migration programs to share information with migrant workers.[22] Legal Support for Children and Women (LSCW) and Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility (CARAM) offer hotlines for counseling assistance and repatriation services.[22] Other NGOs (e.g. Punlork Thmey, Cambodia ACTs, and Hope for Justice) have provided protection and support services including skills training for victims.[19]

In spite of these efforts, there remain gaps and challenges in combating human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Cambodia. First, research has shown that the level of law enforcement, prosecution and conviction of human trafficking is still limited, especially for complicated cases that involve cross-border trafficking offenses.[15] This is because prosecution in trafficking cases is difficult due to the fact that victims are not generally aware of the identity of brokers or traffickers, or the address of the places or factories where the crime occurred. The lack of concrete evidence and information to build a strong case is another reason.[22] Second, even though some progress has been made in respect of victim protection, the government still somewhat relies on NGOs to provide services and in some circumstances the government does not provide sufficient assistance to NGOs to enable them to carry out their work effectively.[15] Third, Cambodian diplomatic missions overseas still lack funding and capacity to provide assistance for repatriated victims. In some cases, workers have been identified in countries where there is no Cambodian diplomatic representation, hence they have not received any support .[15] Fourth, despite some efforts to prevent human trafficking through safe migration programs, a lot of workers still continue to migrate illegally. Educating and providing information about safe migration are not enough. There is a need for more support in respect of building livelihood security in the country, especially among repatriated victims.[22]

3.4 Key questions for a questionnaire

Specific questions to follow up in respect of the progress in human trafficking and sexual exploitation can include:

- Who are the victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in your areas?
- What are the main factors that lead people into becoming victims of human trafficking?
- What types of industries are involved with human trafficking?
- Are there sufficient records relating to migration and human trafficking in your areas? Are such incidents recorded regularly?

- What has been done so far in terms of prevention, prosecution and protection related to human trafficking and sexual exploitation in your areas?
 - What kind of prevention works in your area? Who does it? How do they do it? How effective is it?
 - What kind of prosecution work has been done so far? Who is involved in it? How do they do it? How many human and sexual trafficking offences have resulted in convictions? How effective is it?
 - What kind of protection services are provided for human trafficking victims? Who does it? How do they do it? How effective is it?
- What are the roles of NGOs in terms of prevention, prosecution and protection in respect of human trafficking in your area?
- What challenges or barriers are there in conducting prevention, prosecution and protection activities in your area?
- What can be done to improve the situation?

4. Conclusion

Despite the progress that has been made, migration, human trafficking and sexual exploitation remain significant issues for the Cambodian government in terms of policies and law enforcement. Migration and human trafficking are closely linked and driven by the same factor – poverty. Many view migration as a means to improve their livelihood and to escape from poverty. With an estimated labor force of 300,000 young people, most of whom lack skills, the country has been struggling to generate adequate employment opportunities for them. Therefore, it is likely that migration will be increasing. The impacts of migration are mixed. With the massive and increasing scale of remittances being sent back, there is no doubt that migration has lifted a number of households from poverty. Nonetheless, migration especially illegal migration places people in a more vulnerable situation, and subject to being abused. The review shows that migration with proper documentation leads to more positive impacts and safety. However, the lengthy process and high cost of documentation prevent many to migrate legally.

Migrant workers, especially illegal migrants, are more vulnerable to human trafficking. Cambodia remains a source, transit and destination for human trafficking and sexual exploitation. The review found that modern slavery and human trafficking in the country involves several key sectors such as manufacturing, farming, construction and domestic workers. Outside Cambodia, human trafficking exists in several forms including (i) trafficking

for marriage, (ii) forced labour for fishing vessels, (iii) forced labour in domestic works, (iv) forced begging, and (v) trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

A number of efforts have been undertaken by the government and stakeholders to combat human trafficking and to promote safe and legal migration. This includes the implementation and updating of national policies, adoption of international protocols, MoUs, conventions and laws. From the review, several policy options could be considered including:

- It is clear that addressing illegal migration and human trafficking should be tackled from its root cause – poverty. Hence, promoting local economic development, enhancing agricultural productivity, providing employment opportunities and improving access to social services are vital.
- As illegal migrants are more exposed to being exploited and trafficked, any measures that enhance safe migration would minimize their risk. This includes: (1) reducing the cost and lengthy process of documentation for poor migrants; and (2) disseminating safe migration practices through education campaigns.
- As human trafficking remains a significant challenge, there is a need to foster the implementation of existing legal mechanisms that protect migrant workers, which include various laws, international conventions, and MoUs.

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