

Forum for 21st century

on Visa Policy issues

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations appreciates the Forum for 21st Century's initiative in discussion on global migration issues. We manifest our full commitment to the search for mutual understanding and a conjoint solution of the given global problem.

The ASEAN members are fully aware of the global problem of migration and the crucial need to tackle the waves of migration effectively and flexibly. We recognize the growing importance of global cooperation in solving issues on state, as well as the highest level, and identify with the global efforts to improve the status of migrants in general by creating a framework for a common visa policy.

Being one of the most developed regions of the continent, we are experiencing significant waves of economic migration from South Asia and China. Owing to the large population numbers in the continents and given the geographical position (many parts of the region lying along coasts or in deltas) and high exposure to environmental risks, Asia and the Pacific are regions very vulnerable to climate-induced migration. In 2012 up to 30 million people were displaced from Asia and the Pacific due to environmental causes such as eroding shorelines, desertification, severe storms or floods. Apart from extreme weather events, climate change is expected to raise the sea level, which endangers small island nations in the Pacific region.

Due to growing population and increasing environmental risks, we anticipate an increase in cross-border migration in the following years. It is likely that migration will occur in the so-called “climate change hot spots” – i.e. densely populated delta areas, low-lying coastal areas, islands and atolls with a high risk of being affected by climate change effects. Such potential migration is expected to occur in large sudden waves (in contrast to socio-economic migration), which will constitute a great burden for the regional migration authorities, increase a pressure on infrastructure and social and health care and may lead to general decline of economic growth.

Since climate-induced migration is close to impossible to predict, elaboration of a complex emergency framework is necessary.

As many as 1 billion people in the area are facing the risk of freshwater shortages, declining crop yields and serious flooding as a result of climate change. ASEAN suggests not only