



**REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON  
STRENGTHENING THE COLLECTION  
AND USE OF INTERNATIONAL  
MIGRATION DATA IN THE CONTEXT  
OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Bangkok, Thailand, 5 - 8 February 2019**

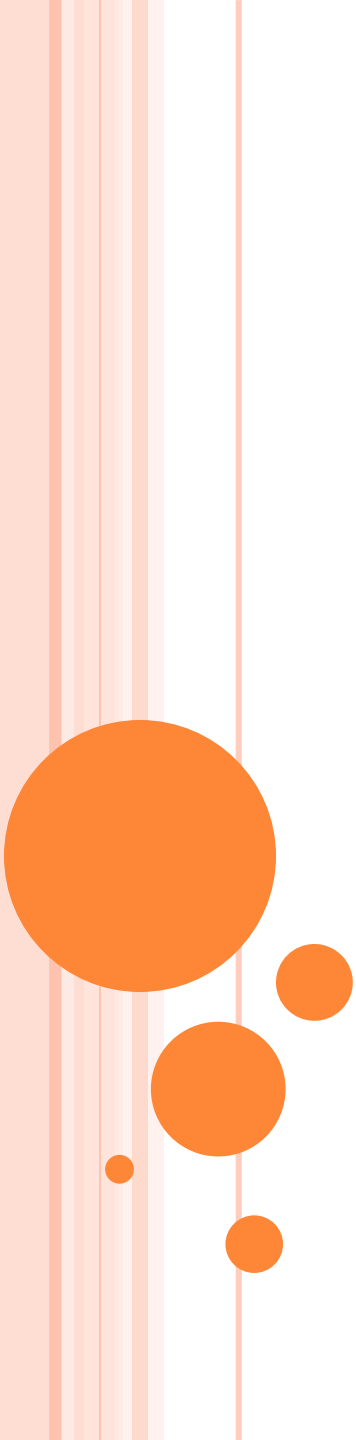
# **MIGRATION POLICY AND DATA NEEDS**

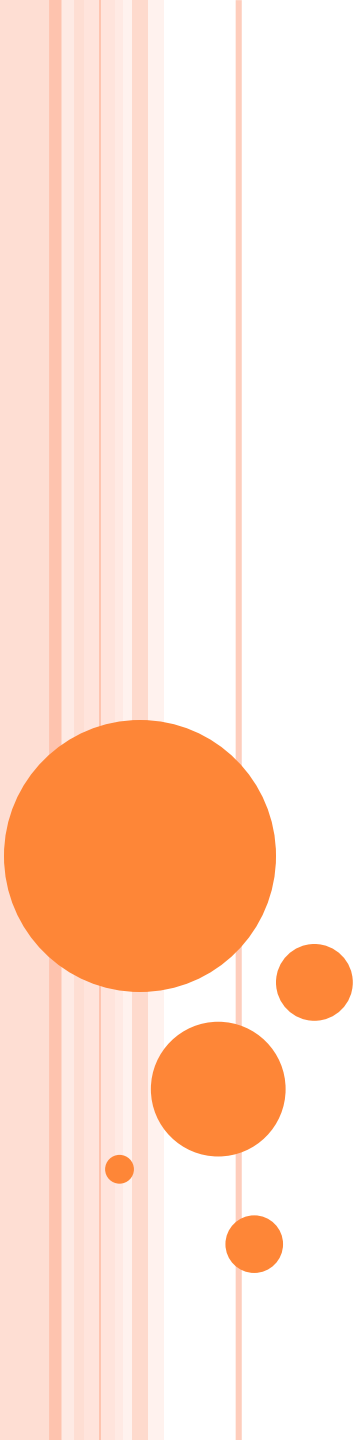


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# BACKGROUND

- Sri Lanka is one of the many countries in the world that benefits from migration for employment.
- The remittances from foreign employment contribute to almost 8.23 per cent of GDP, the highest non- traditional foreign exchange earnings of the country.
- Remittances received through migration for employment in the year 2017 was SL Rs. 1,091,972 Mn. which was 65 per cent of the total foreign exchange earnings of the country (Central Bank Annual Report 2017 - Provisional stats).

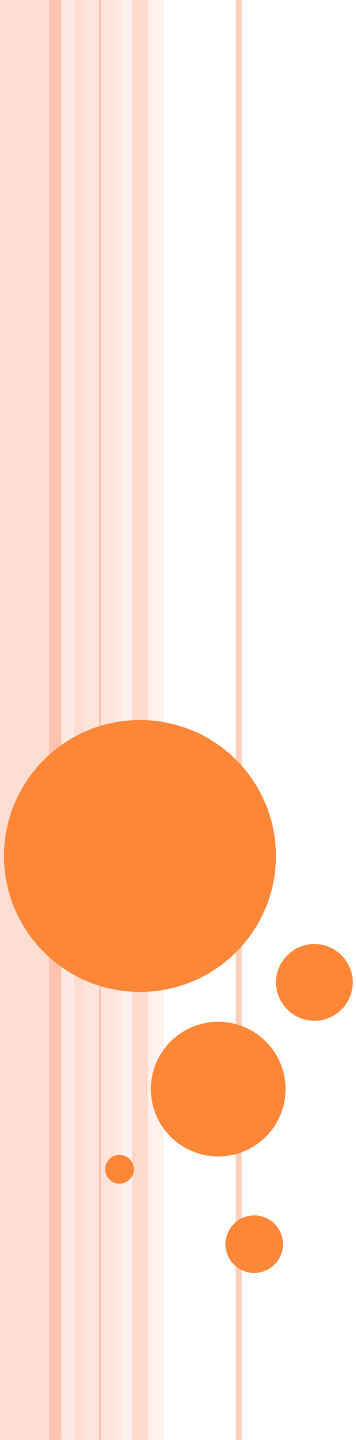
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- **Acknowledging the contribution of migrant workers to the Sri Lankan economy, the Government has instituted a number of mechanisms and programmes to effectively manage the migration cycle that include pre-departure, in-service, return and reintegration stages.**
  - **The initial institutional response to migration management in Sri Lanka was through the Ministry of Labour, subsequently the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) was established under the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment Act No. 21 of 1985.**
  - **The establishment of the SLBFE was a key State response to the increasing trend in migration for employment in Sri Lanka and a systematic approach was adopted since then.**

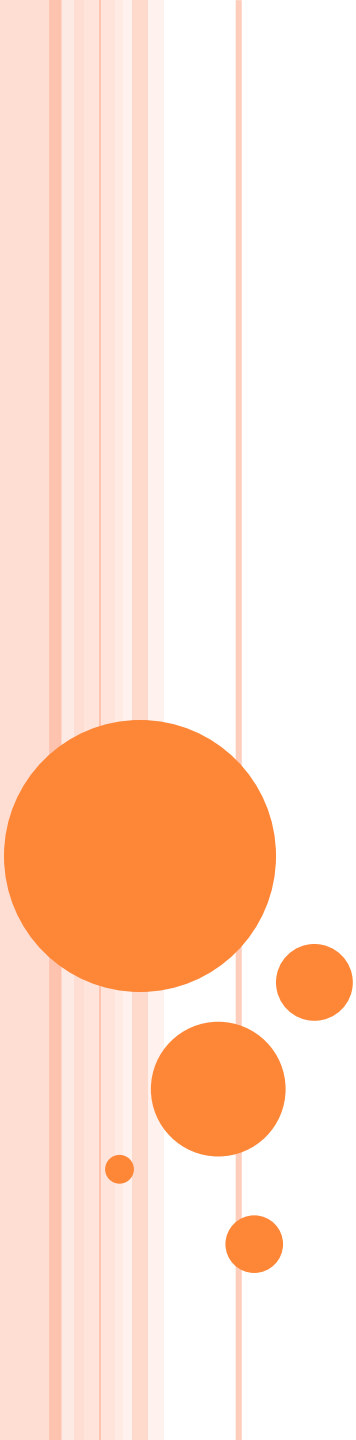
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- In 2007, a separate Ministry was formed, Ministry for Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare which articulated a long term vision on migration for employment.
  - A landmark in the long term plans of the ministry was the formulation of the National Labour Migration Policy in 2008 with the technical support and collaboration of the ILO.
  - The National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP) of Sri Lanka has three main policy components: governance of the migration process, protection and empowerment of migrant workers and their families and linking migration and development process.
  - The NLMP gives direction to the holistic and comprehensive management of migration in Sri Lanka and emphasizes the necessity of a comprehensive return and re-integration plan to cover all processes and areas of re-integration of returnee migrants.

Source: Sub policy and National Action Plan on Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers, Ministry of Foreign Employment, Sri Lanka, November 2015

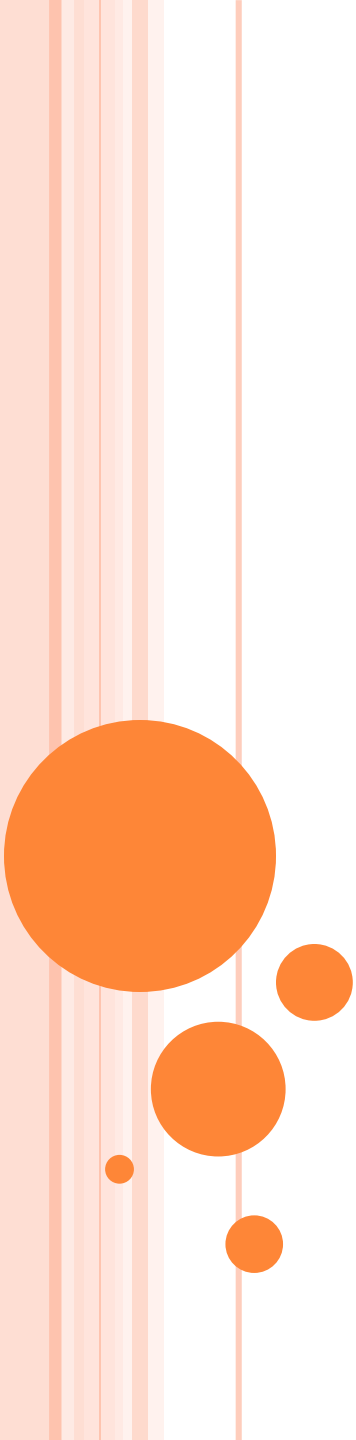
# MIGRATION-RELEVANT POLICY ISSUES

- The institutional framework for the labour migration process is provided by the Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare. It is important to define clearly the role of agencies in the process of labour migration in promoting access to opportunities, and ensuring the protection of the rights of migrant workers based on a long-term vision for the country.
- Sri Lanka's overarching national development strategy ("Vision 2025") addresses limited aspects of migration, and thus does not fully recognize the developmental impact that migration may have on the country's economy and society.
- Regularly published migration data are limited to the results of the Census of Population and Housing. Also, there is limited data on profiles on migrants, duration of stay, wages and working conditions, remittance patterns and their utilization, returnees and their reintegration and transnational communities and their engagements.

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- **There is no one Government entity in Sri Lanka responsible for designing and enacting emigration and immigration policies.**
  - **Migrant remittances are regarded as more reliable and stable other than capital flows, the Sri Lanka recognizes that they are private household transfers and should not be considered as a substitute for official development aid or foreign direct investment.**
  - **The Sri Lanka recognizes the right of migrants to participate in the democratic decision-making processes of the State, and to be represented in institutions related to overseas employment.**
  - **Sri Lanka's diplomatic missions in labour receiving countries are equipped with a mandate and facilities to provide for protection and welfare of Sri Lankan workers overseas. Workers leaving service due to various reasons and in repatriation. The role of diplomatic missions thus extends to preparation for return and reintegration.**

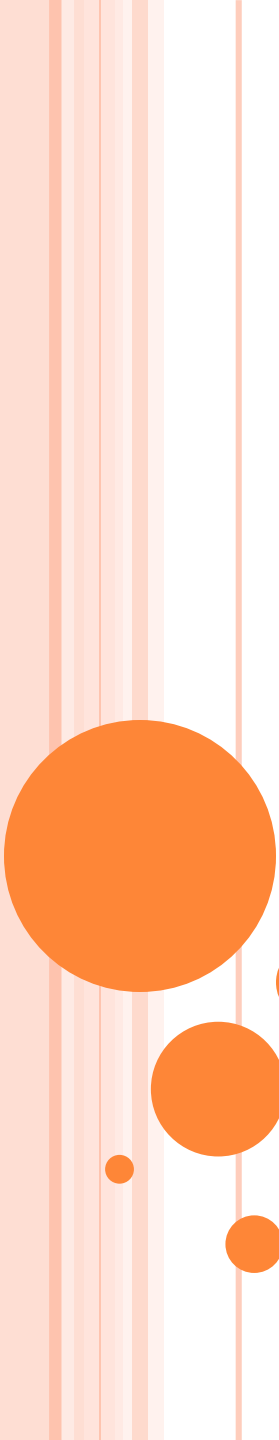
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- **The Sri Lanka recognizes that the ultimate protection to all migrant workers is the possession of skills. It is this environment that has prompted the Sri Lanka to take a gradual and strategic approach to changing the profile of Sri Lanka's migrant worker population.**
  - **There is a need for an overarching mechanism for complaints at all levels of the migration process that is mandated to receive, investigate and refer complaints arising out of violations of human and labour rights of migrants (Including migrant workers).**
  - **Integration and mainstreaming of labour migration in national employment, decent work, labour market and development policy, as well as in poverty reduction policies, is essential in order to maximize the positive effects of Sri Lanka's labour migration.**



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- **Promote the migration of skilled workers by securing employment opportunities for skilled workers in safe and regulated work environments, and by providing accessible and widespread opportunities for prospective migrant workers to become skilled workers.**
  - **As well as the diversity of Sri Lankan transnational communities requires differentiated approaches between skilled and professional workers, and low-skilled workers, and ethnic communities, permanent and long-term migrants and temporary migrant workers.**
  - **There are no specific programmes that target returnee migrant worker to ensure their Successful integration into the societies they left behind.**

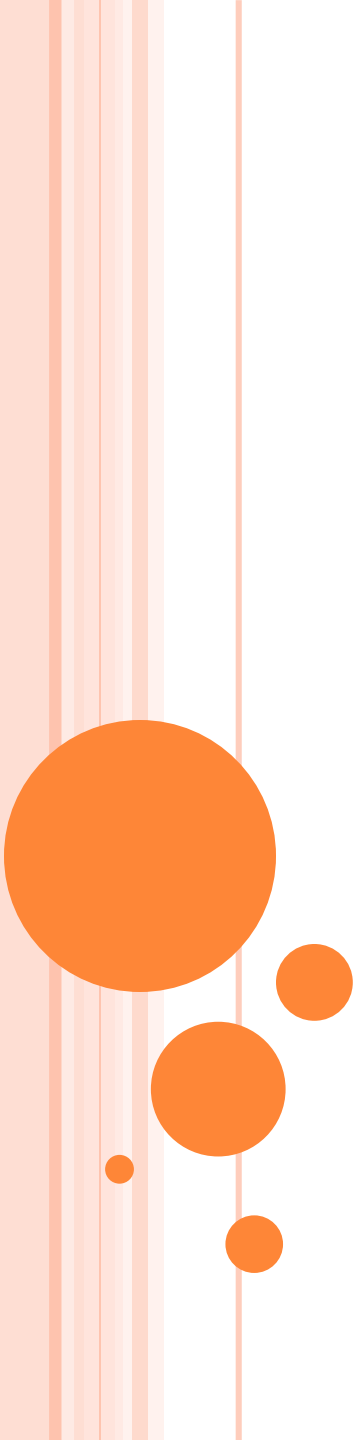
# DATA NEED TO ADDRESS THE POLICY ISSUES

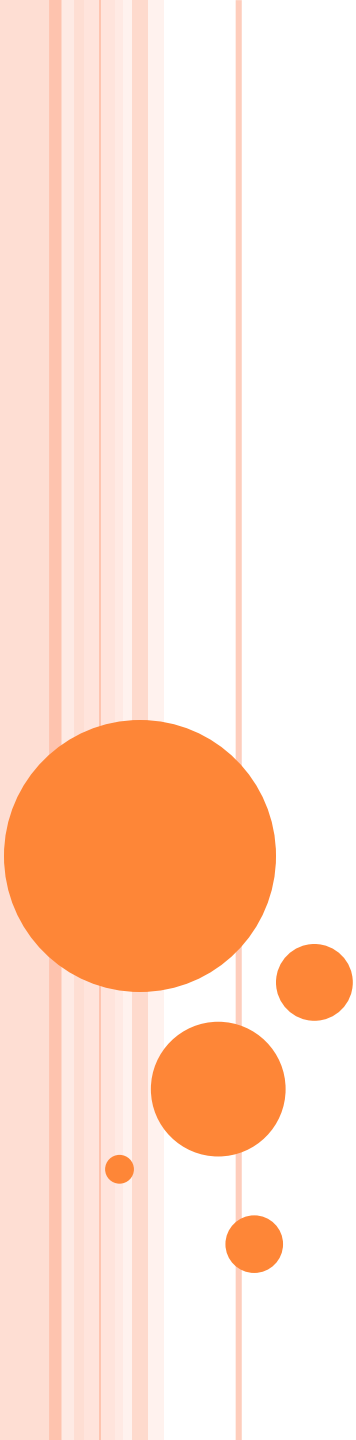
- **Socio-economic characteristics of emigrants and emigrants**
- **Main reasons for migrants to move from the country**
- **Location details of migrants after they come in to the country**
- **Figures regarding stock of emigration**
- **Main reasons for citizens to return to the country**

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- **Basic characteristics, such as education, employment status of returned migrants at their return.**
  - **Reintegration details of returned citizens in terms of education, labour force participation, civil participation, living standard (poverty-level).**
  - **Wages and remittance patterns of migrant workers.**
  - **Data on received complaints and actions have been taken regarding migrants.**

# CHALLENGES BEHIND THE DATA GAP

- Sri Lanka shall facilitate and undertake measures to promote employment opportunities in foreign countries, especially non-traditional opportunities and new overseas markets.
- Sri Lanka shall mainstream migration into national development frameworks and strategies.
- Establish processes of provoking skills to workers and promoting the migration of skilled labour.
- Recognizes that migrant remittances are a key link between migration and development.

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- **Recognize the contribution made by migrants and facilitate their return and reintegration with opportunities for skills transfer, productive employment and conflict-free social integration.**
  - **Sri Lanka shall engage the transitional communities of Sri Lankans settled abroad to mobilize their expertise and skills and resources for promotion of investments, technology transfers, trade and good governance.**
  - **Develop documentation systems to provide comprehensive information on the migration process.**
  - **Sri Lanka shall develop coherent institutional framework. The management and administration mechanism shall be based on this framework.**

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- **There will be a uniform procedures, practices and guidelines that apply to all Sri Lankan missions in major Sri Lankans living in countries.**
  - **Promote overseas employment opportunities while safeguarding the rights of migrant workers.**
  - **Take actions to ensure just and adequate remuneration for migration workers in employment.**
  - **Address violations and abuses in the different stages of the labour migration process through appropriate redress mechanisms.**