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Roundtable 1

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3rd Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)
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Session 1.1: Mainstreaming migration in development planning – key actors, key strategies, key actions

PUTTING MIGRATION IN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Tasneem Siddiqui¹

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Introduction

It is now generally accepted that along with transfer of human capital and resources migration leads to transmission of skills, ideas, knowledge and creates link and inter-personal networks, contributing to economic and social developments of both countries of origin and destination. However, such outcomes are not automatic. In order to link migration with development some countries are in the process of integrating migration into development strategies. This paper attempts to locate some of the potential interfaces between the two that can be pursued at state, regional and global levels. It concentrates on four issue areas. These are: poverty reduction, economic growth, return and circulation of highly skilled migrants and climate change.

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Poverty Reduction Policies and Migration

Poverty might be reduced or enhanced due to migration (Skeldon, 2002). Therefore, any intervention to reduce poverty should try to decrease the negative results of migration and increase the positive outcomes. Migration should be linked to global strategic development planning such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers of various countries, development agenda of donor organisations and more importantly national development planning of different countries.

- Studies have shown that international migration requires relatively large investments. So the poorest of the poor cannot use this as a livelihood option to overcome poverty. Policy directions are needed in all the above poverty reduction strategies to encourage public and private financial institutions to lend the poor at a lower interest rate for soft collateral to finance migration.

Integrating migration in national policies of economic growth

At a national level both labour receiving and origin countries have particular industrial, agricultural, trade, service sector or infrastructure development policies to achieve certain growth rate. Migration needs to be interfaced with those national policies.

- Access to foreign exchange is crucial in pursuing many of the developmental goals. Remittances have become one of the important sources of foreign exchange earning for many countries. Since 2001 a large sum of migrants' remittances are transferred through formal channel, yet a large amount is still transferred through informal channels. At the remote areas of countries of origin as well as in the host countries access to formal channels for remittance transfer is secured.
- High cost of transfer is another area of concern. Some countries have reduced the cost by introduction of internet and mobile banking, and some others have addressed the problem through introduction of grassroots level non-governmental organisations as the last leg of remittance transfer (Siddiqui 2009). The central banks of remittance receiving and sending countries need to sit together to harmonise their policies for increasing formal flow. Targeted policies of encouraging use of remittance in certain sectors by the migrants and their families can produce higher economic growth and reduce foreign aid dependence.

- Civil society organisations should demand to their respective countries to allocate equivalent amount of 5 percent of remittance that they receive in their budget to remittance and migration governance. Remittance transfer agencies like Western Union, Money gram should contribute a fraction of their earnings from remittance in welfare of the migrants.
- The government of countries of origin should provide incentives to public and private sector business advisory institutions to develop projects that will impart training to migrant families in financial management, project planning and link them with formal financial institutions to access investment loans. Non-governmental organisations can be taken as partners at the grassroots to reach the left behind families of migrants.
- Migrants' remittances can also be used for large scale infrastructural and other development projects. Government and semi-government bodies may float bonds for funding construction of bridges, modernization of airports and communication development projects on profit sharing arrangements with the migrant investors.
- Recent studies have shown that a section of highly skilled migrants, at certain stages in their lifetimes, return to their countries of origin and contribute to the development of the country by using the knowledge and technology they acquired in the countries of migration. Some of them circulate between home and host countries and bring back valuable knowledge and experiences. Sending countries need to use their skill in different development programmes.

Incorporation of migration in climate change debate

- Sea level rise linked with climate change will involuntarily displace a large number of people. Only recently researches are being conducted to analyse the impact of climate change on population movements. Strategies are required to enable the displaced population to adapt with the outcomes of climate change.
- Greater cooperation between those working on environmental issues and those working on migration should work together. Developed countries that are contributing more to global warming should support programmes in vulnerable countries for diversifying their agricultural production methods and creating alternative livelihood options.
- Climate change and restrictive migration policies of developed countries may give rise to more irregular migration. Civil society bodies should campaign for opening up of avenues for regular migration in the developed countries.

Conclusion

The discussion above highlights some of the ways in which migration policies can be integrated into development strategies for the benefits of all – origin countries, destination countries, men and women who migrate and also who do not migrate can participate in such planned development. UN institutions, development partners, regional bodies, national governments and civil society bodies all can incorporate migration in their development agenda.

Annex I

Example of Good Practice



Remittance Festival organised by the MRPC at the grassroots



MRPC Campaign on Safe Migration



Best remittance user family



Finance Minister honouring a migrant

Migration is an integral part of the economy of Bangladesh. Remittances received from the migrants are five times higher than the foreign aid and nine times more than the foreign direct investment to the country. For the last five consecutive years, despite widening trade deficit and relatively low flow of FDI the country's balance of payments remained in the surplus. This has happened because of increased inflow of remittances to the country. The central bank undertook several reform measures that attracted the flow of remittances through formal channels. It collaborated with a civil society organisation, the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), in disseminating new methods of transfer and the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry of the Government of Bangladesh collaborated in disseminating procedures of safe migration at the grassroots. RMMRU, in partnership with seven grassroots NGOs, formed Migrants' Rights Protection Committees (MRPC) at local level of migrant intensity districts.

These MRPCs have gradually given voice to the voiceless migrants and their families by providing all kinds of services, ranging from counselling on migration procedure, opening of bank accounts to facilitate redress of cases of fraudulence. Along with nation-wide media campaign MRPCs are now conducting remittance festivals at local levels where all public and private commercial banks and government agencies involved in migration process display their products in stalls. Through festivity of the fairs MRPCs have been successful in connecting aspirant and returnee migrant workers, their families, bank officials and government functionaries with each other. Such connectivity among users and service providers have resulted in securing better services and increased flow of remittances through formal channels and their productive utilisation.

These MRPCs annually honour a select group of migrants and their family members for their contribution to national

with 'Person of Gold' Award

economy as the 'people of gold'. Grassroots level bank officials and recruiting agencies are also honoured for providing quality services to the migrant clients. Honouring of these groups of people has generated a momentum for productive utilisation of remittances. This is an excellent example of government-civil society collaboration in ensuring good governance in migration.

Annex II

Three recommendations for reducing the cost of migration:

Abolition of levy system: In order to discourage recruitment of unskilled overseas workers governments of some Southeast Asian countries impose yearly levy on the employers. In reality, the cost of such levy is passed on to the migrant workers. For example, in 2008, the Malaysian government earned as much as 1500 X 300000 from poor Bangladeshi migrant workers. The GFMD 2009 can urge the receiving countries to withdraw imposition of levy on unskilled workers. This will reduce cost of migration significantly.

Elimination of visa trading: In some of the Gulf countries work visa trading has become a major problem. Allegedly agents of visa issuing authorities, employers, and the recruiting agents in the receiving countries are involved in selling visas to recruiting agents of sending countries or their intermediaries. Visas are sold within the range of US\$1000 to \$1500. This amount is added to regular costs of migration. The GFMD can request the concerned authorities of the Gulf countries to launch a drive against visa trading. It can mobilise the civil society bodies attending the Forum to launch a media campaign using television channels like Aljazeera to disseminate the message that 'visa trading is haram in Islam'. This will help forming of opinion of nationals of Gulf States against the practise of visa trading.

Online recruitment system

In order to reduce fraudulence in the recruitment process at the grassroots level the governments of sending countries may develop an online recruitment system. The aspirant migrant workers can register themselves from any place of the country online. The private recruitment agencies can then recruit directly from the online database. This system has the potential of curbing the role of the intermediaries operating at different levels and thus has the potential to reduce cost of migration at the sending end. Bangladesh has started online registration of workers though it is yet to be fully functional.



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THE NEED FOR A HUMAN CENTRED APPROACH

(A NGO contribution to the Global Forum on Migration and Development, from a practitioner viewpoint, based on the Caritas experience)

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Summary

Caritas advocates a triple-win solution to migration involving the home countries, the host countries and the migrants themselves. At the centre of the Poverty-Inequity-violence triangle is the face of an—increasingly female—person who is trying to rebuild his/her life. The person of the migrant and his/her spouse and children should be placed at the centre of our reflections and concerns.

The Caritas vision is not one of economic growth alone, but embraces integral human development. Both sender and receiver countries currently adopt an excessively

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instrumental approach to migration. Furthermore, because the current focus is on migration statistics, the least-developed countries are under-represented and run the risk of not being considered by policy makers. NGOs should strive to avoid this instrumental bias in the academic and political debate on immigration, and they should try to promote the concerns and interests of the migrants themselves.

To tackle forced migration effectively, a coherent strategy must provide humanitarian assistance and protection, support strategies for sustainable return and re-integration, and address first and foremost the root causes of instability: poverty, conflict, natural disasters, bad governance and human rights abuses. Internally displaced persons and refugees need shelter, food, water and sanitation in the short term, in addition to health support, education and income-generating activities in the long term.

Example Georgia

In Georgia the Caritas network is engaged in fighting the root causes of migration, which are poverty and lack of opportunities.
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Based on a survey with young people, the causes of migration were analysed. In a second phase village committees were formed in order to find joint solutions. Training to individuals was delivered and the foundation of small businesses was supported by this project.
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In the host countries, development projects should integrate the refugee population's needs into those of the host communities in order to prevent new conflicts. In the home countries, increasing employment opportunities is a key element of development policies, involving primary education for all and support to vocational training centres in order to foster the economic integration of youth. Two further pillars of employment success are financing labour-intensive projects and access to microcredit.

Example Mauritania

Mauritania currently hosts ca. 40,000 foreign migrants, many of them in transit. In addition to food and medical assistance for the most vulnerable cases the Caritas network provides counselling to find work and shelter and training for illiterate persons in order to improve the options both at home and in a country of destination
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Civil society should be promoted and empowered as a driving force for human development. Migrants' organizations should be involved as development actors to

achieve connections and synergies between communities in host countries and home countries through bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Example: European Sustainable Reintegration Organisations network (ERSO)

Under the ERSO project 10 European agencies, most of them from the Caritas network, formed a network for the counselling of people wishing to return to their country of origin. Apart from counselling and return facilitation, a special focus is given to the reintegration of returnees and the expansion of the provision of services to the countries of origin.³

Migration should be seen as a basic freedom and an opportunity for achieving the millennium development goals. Fair agreements should be established between home and host countries. NGOs should push states to endorse the World Health Organization's Global Code for Ethical Recruitment. Furthermore, organising circular migration could be part of the solution to the brain drain–brain gain dilemma.

Mobility centres should be set up to provide advice in the countries of origin, transit and destination and to foster migration as an informed option. Remittances have a significant effect on development but they must not be considered as an alternative to official development aid. They should also be used for the benefit of individuals, families and communities.

Development objectives must be mainstreamed into migration policies, trade policies and agriculture policies. The capacity of choice, especially of the poorest, should be reinforced. Finally migration should not be seen in its income-generating capacity, but as an end in itself.

³ <http://www.erso-project.eu/>



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Session 1.2: Engaging diasporas and migration in development policies and programs

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Summary

The purpose of this paper is first to highlight ways that origin and host states and other agencies can engage with diasporas and migration to effect desired development outcomes; and second to surface key areas for further discussion as part of the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) Civil Society Days (CSD).

Diasporas can leverage various forms of capital – including financial, intellectual, political, and cultural – while social capital is the intangible resource that facilitates mutually beneficial collective action. Diaspora motivations and interests are important factors in the context of engagement. However, diaspora altruism is not a prerequisite for development. Indeed, diaspora interests are often quite narrow and private but successful engagement can bring a combination of public and private gain.

There is a good fit between diasporas' resources and interests and the Millennium Development Goals concerned with poverty reduction (particularly through job-creation);

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educational improvements; gender equality and empowerment of women; and health improvements.

The paper argues that the most useful thing for governments and other agencies to do is to create the conditions that enable the diaspora to play to their strengths and respond to their own interests and motivations in ways that are developmentally beneficial. However, the required combination of political will, capacity and competence in both host and origin countries may be lacking and in these circumstances, there tends to be an emphasis on engaging diasporas in initiatives through funding mechanisms and projects. The vast majority of diasporas are unlikely to aspire to become development activists. While a few may be catalytic, most diaspora-supported development projects aimed at their countries of origin risk having only marginal developmental impact. Indeed, diasporas' contributions to development cannot substitute for the contributions of a developmental state; they can usefully and powerfully complement the efforts of the developmental state.

Many of the countries that have successfully engaged their diasporas, such as Taiwan, China, India, Philippines, and Mexico better fit this description of developmental state than do many African states now actively interested in tapping their diasporas' resources. The former have developed diaspora engagement strategies related to their needs, the forms of capital their respective diasporas can mobilize and the motivations and interests of the diaspora. However, such an approach is predicated upon a degree of state capacity that poses a challenge for many of the poorer developing countries, especially those in Africa. Many countries in Africa have established directorates for diaspora affairs, often located within the presidency or ministries. These developments reflect a shifting attitude of origin governments toward their diaspora populations, which in itself is welcome. But the overtures to potential diaspora returnees are in such stark contrast to the conditions of service for those who have stayed. Such a contradiction may render many such efforts unsustainable and even counterproductive.

Diaspora engagement does not thrive in a policy vacuum. The key sets of policy options for governments wishing to engage diasporas for development are: (1) create environments in both host and origin countries that enable diasporas to realize their full potential as citizens and residents (in the case of migrants), alongside all other citizens and residents; (2) specific policies to gain multiplier effects from application and usage of diaspora resources, particularly financial and intellectual capital. Both of these policy options are ongoing processes, often of trial and error.

Host country governments are not usually as resource constrained as those in developing countries but they often lack the capacity or will to evolve a coherent set of migration policies that would constitute an enabling environment for diaspora engagement around international development agendas. The result may be an emphasis on the relatively less contentious option of funding diaspora organizations' development projects rather than dealing with the more substantive, but tricky, policy reforms, such as regularizing undocumented migrants' status.

Most emerging markets jobs are created by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) so understandably interest is growing in finding ways to harness diaspora resources to invest in and strengthen SMEs (eg through business advice and technical assistance). This issue merits discussion at GFMD CSD. Some relevant issues might include:

- What are the similarities and differences between diaspora investors and domestic/foreign investors, what are the ways of categorizing and servicing the former – what sort of information, systems, and support do they need?
- How can diaspora skills and know-how be leveraged to support SMEs to occupy more favorable positions in value and supply chains?
- What combination of face-to-face and technologically assisted interactions might enable more experienced diaspora entrepreneurs, investors, and managers to mentor and support counterparts in developing countries?
- What combination of policies and practice enable transnational diaspora entrepreneurs to establish thriving enterprises that create wealth and jobs in both host and origin countries?
- How can we integrate diaspora resources into larger enterprise development programs?
- What kinds of institutional arrangements and mechanisms would enable us to scale up diaspora engagement around enterprise and job-creation to have significant impact in developing countries?



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Summary

The African Diaspora is a variegated group comprising “people of African descent” belonging to successive generations, resident in diverse geographical settings, and promoting varied forms of links to Africa. Definitions and characterisation of Diaspora vary by disciplines and by the Diasporas’ expectations on the one hand, and the identified homeland on the other. Africa has successive generations of Diaspora and emigrants. The first generation of Diaspora consists exclusively of slave traffic to the Americas, later followed by those who went to pursue higher education in the developed North and those who migrated for work, trade and other aspirations.

Engagement of African Diasporas in homeland development involves the Diasporas themselves, governments of both host and home countries and NGO as well as civil

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society organisations in both settings. The subject has gained significant currency across the African continent with the African Union (AU) recognising the Diaspora as its sixth region. In trying to harness the role of their Diasporas and emigrants as a resource for development, some African countries have recently favoured wide-ranging policies, among them granting of dual citizenship and, inherently, voting rights, establishment of Diaspora units in the government structure, and sustained dialogue with Diaspora and migrant associations, which are themselves either NGOs or civil society organisations.

Involvement of the African Diaspora in homeland development has taken different forms. Migrant and Diaspora NGOs and civil society organisations including professional associations and business groups have made different kinds of contribution in their countries of origin, both Diaspora and migrants have become a resource for homeland development through remittances, brief project-linked undertakings and through periodic return. In the Maghreb, Moroccan and Algerian migrants and Diasporas have stimulated homeland development and engaged in co-development initiatives with the destination countries; the Horn of Africa has witnessed effective post-conflict reconstruction by Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants and Diasporas, and Somalis have sustained livelihoods in their failed state; and in Western Africa, generations of Ghanaian, Nigerian, Malian and Senegalese migrants and Diasporas have positively impacted homeland development, complementing government efforts from several fronts. A few migration institutions have recently been established in Africa, albeit with a strong influence from the developed North, their capacity, programmes and ability to embrace migration and development policy-making, not to mention their non-engagement of the Diasporas with the expertise, skills and desire to inject desirable changes in their countries of origin.

Although most African countries lack explicit migration and development policies, they make significant overtures to their Diasporas and emigrants. Some of them – Ghana, Nigeria and Burundi, for instance – now grant dual citizenship to their nationals to enhance their contribution and investment in their homelands. Virtually all the migrant and Diaspora associations make homecoming visits comprising exhibitions, dialogue and demonstration of skills that are considered necessary for developing their members' countries of origin.

There has been an explosive increase in remittance inflows to all developing regions with the exception of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) which trails all of them, even the much smaller Europe and Central Asia. There are also instances where Diasporas have been

either peace-makers or peace-wreckers in their countries of origin that were once torn apart by conflict. Governments have useful lessons to draw from Diasporas and migrants as peace-makers, particularly in Africa where security remains a major constraint to development and reconstruction. Specifically, Diasporas and migrants engage in homeland dynamics of policy interest, notably remittances and conflict resolution in the homeland, involvement in political events unfolding in the homeland, civic-oriented involvement in the homeland and lobbying in the host country for homeland development. Indeed, development-centred NGOs, investment groups, political groups, national development groups, welfare/refugee groups, supplementary schools, and virtual organisations do play key roles in community-to-community transfers, identity building/awareness raising, lobbying in current home on issues relating to ancestral home, trade with and investment in ancestral home, transfers of intangible resources, support for development on a more 'professional' basis and payment of taxes in ancestral home. With the opening up of airwaves and adoption of IT policies to stimulate development, many African countries are positively engaging with virtual Diasporas.

African Diasporas and emigrants are often at the mercy of rapidly changing migration policies of the countries of destination. The tendency has been for the countries of destination within and outside of Africa to dictate terms to African Diasporas and emigrants without any intervention from their countries of origin. This lacuna puts the Diaspora and immigrants at the mercy of individual destination-country governments and strains relations between the two countries, with the victims unfairly subjected to discordant or polarised policies and programmes. Whereas the EU has policies and strong institutions to contain African immigration, the AU has none that can claim to bind African emigrants and Diasporas, or even their institutions. Recommended options include strengthening Diaspora-homeland residents' links, providing opportunities for skilled Diasporas and migrants to make contributions, paying attention to social remittances and co-development, embracing initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), undertaking suitable national migration studies and incorporating Diaspora issues in national development frameworks.



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Session 1.3: Addressing the root causes of migration through development, specifically in light of the current global economic crisis

**MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT LINKAGES RE-EXAMINED IN THE CONTEXT OF
THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS**

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Summary

The paper examines the impact of the global economic crisis on temporary contract workers belonging to both South Asian and South East Asian countries in the Middle East, in particular in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The GCC countries, for quite a long time, engaged in the theory of demographic imbalance through which

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they had plans to regulate the expatriates through vigorous immigration and labour policies. In this context, this paper addresses the shifts in policies and strategies to be adopted in the countries of origin to protect the interests of temporary workers, thus converting the crisis into opportunity.

The global financial and economic crisis which is being experienced throughout the world at present is considered as one of the worst global economic crises since the Great Depression of the 1930s. One of the regions which is facing the serious consequences of the crisis is the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries which accommodate a large concentration of temporary migrant contract workers. The ILO has estimated that 10 per cent of the unskilled workers from the GCC countries will return home in 2009. The return of a large number of migrant workers and the decline of labour flows to the GCC countries will create serious economic problems in labour sending as well as receiving countries. South Asian and South East Asian countries account for 60 per cent of temporary workers in the Gulf.

The migrant workers in GCC countries are basically vulnerable because they are temporary contract workers who are at the mercy of the employers and not protected by any civil or labour laws relating to wages, working conditions and other monetary and non-monetary benefits or protection from the harassment of the employers, in particular housemaids working in the households. Non-compliance of provisions of the labour contract by the employers in Gulf countries are a common phenomenon. The Gulf countries have not implemented any minimum living wages for the expatriates. Non-payment of salaries and denial of non-wage benefits are common. Workers are forced to work more than eight hours. The unskilled and semi-skilled workers are accommodated in crowded labour camps in small rooms without proper facilities and in recent years the Gulf countries witnessed strikes and lockouts by the workers from South Asia. Female domestic workers like housemaids are ill-treated, harassed, sexually exploited and forced to work long hours as they are not protected by any existing labour laws. Prohibiting poor migrants from bringing along their families and harassing workers by confiscation of passports by the employer are the common practices. The labour courts are generally inaccessible to the ordinary migrants. Besides this, the GCC countries have been following a deliberate policy of reducing the size of the migrant labour force through a number of measures. In this context, a large fall in the demand for the migrant workers due to the global crisis will make the vulnerable workers more vulnerable.

In this context, both the labour sending and receiving countries should seriously think of addressing the following issues:

- ◆ Cost of migration: The recruiting agencies in both labour sending and receiving countries and the employers of the labour receiving countries should take necessary steps to curtail the unhealthy practice of collecting large sums of money from the emigrants before leaving their countries of origin. This is the right time for countries to discuss the zero cost of migration
- ◆ Labour-receiving countries should work on model labour contracts for various categories of workers, specifying the wages, working hours, food and accommodation and non-wage benefits such as paid holiday, health insurance and return air tickets.
- ◆ It is the right time for the labour sending countries both in South Asia and South East Asia to work in close coordination to arrive at the minimum wages for workers and take bold decisions not to send any workers from the region until the implementation of model labour contracts and minimum living wages.
- ◆ Labour receiving countries should introduce special labour laws to protect the female workers from harassment, ill-treatment and sexual exploitation and create labour grievance mechanisms to help the workers to live with dignity.
- ◆ Capacity building, skill development programmes and pre-departure training should be made compulsory for prospective emigrants in the countries of origin which should work on designing a migrant welfare fund in collaboration with emigrants and employers in the countries of destination.