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**Roundtable 1: How to make the migration – development nexus work for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

**Session 1.1: Mainstreaming migration in development planning – key actors, key strategies, key actions**

THE need for a human centred approach

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## **Introduction**

*The focus of our attention should be on the human aspect of migration. We have to keep in mind the faces of 200 million international migrants and millions of displaced people or internal migrants. We have to focus on the Poverty – Inequity – Violence triangle including at its centre, the face of a person, who tries to build or to rebuild his/ her life.*

Generally speaking we have to bear in mind that the face of migration is increasingly female, as half of the migrant population are women, many of them migrating independently.

A win-win solution is not enough. *Caritas advocates for a triple win solution:* country of departure, country of reception and migrants themselves.

In that sense the Caritas vision of development is not about economic growth only, but embraces integral human development, an approach that takes into consideration the wellbeing of the person and all people in their different dimensions: economic, social, political, cultural, ecological and spiritual – in order to achieve a just society. In the same way the focus on the instrumental function of migration for economic development completely leaves out of the picture that migration might have the consequence of **improved livelihood security** and well-being of migrants and their families. A governmental focus on economic growth as the only criteria to measure the

contribution of migration to development of a specific nation can provide justification for policies that harm the well being of individual migrants and their families and exclude them from fundamental human rights.

Moreover, current migration and development policies target countries that are most important in immigration statistics. This puts doubts to the Policy coherence for Development commitment of migration policy makers. *The criteria for prioritising developing countries should be their needs in Human Development and their level of performance in achieving the MDGs*, rather than the number of citizens present or trying to reach the EU or the USA. The least developed countries are under-represented in migration statistics and consequently run the risk of not being considered. There is too little attention given to the so called south-south migration, both in academic expertise and in agencies concern. Too much emphasis on migration for the so called south towards OECD countries hinders us to see the real picture of migration in today's world: receiving countries are often emerging countries; developed countries may be also sending countries, as it is the case for my own country, France.

After these preliminary remarks, I want to focus on major points expressed as recommendations to the Global Forum.

## **1. Introducing the migrants and their organizations as actors of the debate and the action.**

Speaking on the nexus migration and development, we have to take into consideration the persons of the migrant. And their organizations, the role the latter could and should play. The debate cannot be limited to a discussion between governments. The migrants and their organizations should be considered as legitimate actors.

It is too limited to speak in term of "a win win solution" (in favour of the departure country and in favour of the receiving country). We advocate for a triple win solution: country of departure, country of reception and the person of the migrant.

**Migrants are not to be instrumental** to the sending countries nor to the receiving countries.

There is a risk with **receiving countries** to consider migrants only as instruments (to achieve their policies): migrants considered merely as workers. But non workers are sometimes also migrants: spouses, children... these ones have also rights, see the results of the last GFMD in the Philippines, the human rights of the migrants have to be protected and promoted.

Receiving countries tend to consider migrants only under the point of view of their interest: to fulfil the deficit of workers in certain sectors; to help to maintain the size of the population; to help to balance the income and expenses of the social security system, or the system of payments for retirements; to attract high qualified tertiary educated people ; to avoid the brain drain by the US, etc...

**Sending countries** have also the tendency to consider migrants as instrumental: as a safety valve to relieve political tensions; to avoid unrest among educated unemployed young people; to expect remittances, money to alleviate poverty; to contribute to the balance of payments; to fulfil the social tasks the State is unable or unwilling to exercise; to expect the migrants one day to return and to enrich the nation through their skills, etc...

**Migrants are human beings, with human rights.** We should put at the centre of our reflections and concerns the person of the migrant. The aim of any state policy should not be the only interest of the state itself, but the well being of the person of the migrant. Because migrants are human beings, and not (only) instruments of any state policy, as legitimate it could be.

## **2 What does it mean to mainstream Migration in Development planning? Migration and development programmes in action:**

### **2.1. A joint framework for exchange and learning: we have to broaden the frame of the discussion and switch to a “governance approach”, and not limit the debate to an intergovernmental negotiation.**

The discussion on the link between Migration and Development is still young and sometimes confusing. In order to achieve results and clarity – not simplistic solutions, but capturing the complexity of this debate – there is a need for a framework for the exchange of expertise, knowledge and further common learning at all levels. In order to achieve a consensus of understanding and a consensus of action, we need to extend the exchange of knowledge and good practices not only to the receiving and sending countries (it means : states) but integrate in the debate other actors, starting from the migrants’ organizations themselves. We need a framework for discussion, for a migrant **governance** : many actors, no limitation to state actors. The agenda of the debate should not be decided by states alone, but all stakeholders should be in a position to contribute including in the agenda.

The task of NGOs in this regard is to try to change the agenda of the discussion and of the interest in the field of research: switching from a security and state based approach to a much wider approach with more concerns and more stakeholders involved in the debate (for instance : migrants’ organizations, diasporas, trade unions, religious communities, solidarity NGOs network in receiving countries, etc).

### **2. Fighting forced migration**

To tackle forced migration effectively, a coherent strategy is required which provides humanitarian assistance and protection, supports strategies for sustainable return and re-integration, and addresses first and foremost the root causes of instability.

The *root causes* of forced migration are multiple and differ from one country to the other. *It is essential to invest efforts in implementing development programmes in countries at risk*, that aim at upgrading safety and security, as well as eradicating poverty and reducing risks of crises.

- *Poverty*: coherent and well-coordinated pro-poor policies should be developed by the Governments and local authorities

and access to basic social services reinforced, especially for the poorest and most marginalised groups. The role of NGOs in providing services is critical. NGOs should also participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of pro-poor policies.

- *Conflict*: development programmes should focus on conflict prevention, protection, peace-building, inter-community dialogue.
- *Natural disasters*: disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness programmes should be developed. Such programmes are relevant for all levels, from national down to the community level.
- *Bad Governance and Human Rights abuses*: All elements of good governance, including accountability, transparency and integrity (lack of corruption) of public institutions, public sector management, respect for the rule of law and an efficient justice system, stand as prerequisites for successful development. One aspect to highlight is the need for ensuring legal security, which encompasses personal legal security through civil registration, as well as property legal security, such as land registration. Legal security can be a critical factor to force people to migrate; as well as for migrants to return.

### **Example Georgia**

In Georgia the Caritas network is engaged in fighting the root causes of migration, which are poverty and lack of opportunities:

Based on a survey with young people causes for 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.

### **2.3. Provide Humanitarian aid and access to basic social services to migrants, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees.**

Natural (e.g. Tsunami) and man-made (e.g. conflicts) humanitarian crises imply sudden massive flows of IDPs and refugees. Hosting countries, communities and institutions are put under a great deal of pressure to provide survival means to the IDPs and refugees: their immediate needs are immense, including shelter, food and water, sanitation; and in the longer term, they will need physical and mental health support, education and entertainment for the children and youth, income-generating activities.

Depending on the hosting country's policies and interests, forced migrants are more or less welcomed and well taken care of. International relations and geopolitical tactics often prevent the level of support that is necessary to take care of the refugee population by the hosting countries from being achieved.

For example, Syria kept its borders quasi open for more than two years to people fleeing the war in Iraq, with a result of more than one million Iraqis passing through

and staying more or less long term in its territory. Given the tense relations of Syria with many Western (donor) governments, the Syrian government did not ask for nor receive any offer of technical and financial support for the Iraqi refugees. Yet, until it got logistically impossible to sustain, Iraqi children were accepted in public schools and public hospitals received Iraqis in the same way as Syrians. This was not the case in Jordan, which received far more donor support... but not more refugees.

Development projects integrate the refugee population's needs into those of the host communities in order to prevent new conflicts. It is critical to promote projects dedicated to reinforcing solidarity links and inter-community dialogue which brings together the migrants/refugees and the local population of a given area. We may quote here the efforts of the international NGO community in eastern Chad (region affected by the Darfur unrest) to integrate humanitarian assistance to IDPs and refugees on one hand, and the development projects for all categories of people including the local population.

#### **2.4. Development programs to create sustainable employment**

Very often, a lack of prospects encourage people to look elsewhere for opportunities they do not have locally. This phenomenon leads generally to individual migration, even if it is often the result of a family or community strategy.

The unemployment rate is a serious and increasing problem in developing countries. Young people represent half of the unemployed in the world. So it is an enormous challenge. Employment policies should improve and widen people's opportunities, especially young people. Increasing employment opportunities is a key element of development policies.

It is also a key to avoiding rates of migration, which impact negatively on the rest of society. A general lack of opportunities drives young people to migrate in search of these opportunities.

*The economic integration of youth*, in helping them find a decent and useful job, *is essential for economic growth*, regulation of migration flow, and in order to stop the inter-generational transmission of poverty. The inadequacy of vocational training towards the labour market is often an aggravating factor.

Primary education for all is a first step, but we have to go further. We must think about professional insertion and *reinforce our support to vocational training centres*, which help prepare young people for jobs *which are needed in their home country*.

In addition, it is necessary to promote initiatives aiming at employing the operational forces available in useful working sites such as infrastructures and hydraulic planning or to use them for disaster prevention (see disaster preparedness strategy recommendations, especially in Asia).

Finally, it is essential to support two other pillars of employment access, which are financing labour intensive projects, and access to micro credit.

### **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 or in a country of destination

## **2.5. Promoting and empowering civil society as a driving force for human development**

*Promoting and strengthening civil society organisations (associations, task forces, administration committees, microfinance institutions, mutual companies, local organisations, federations, social movements) seems to be a central element of a policy which supports accession to opportunities for all and fulfilment of potentialities. This way it will promote global human development.*

## **2.6. Participation of migrants in development programmes : Mobilising migrants as agents of development**

Considering that migrants' organisation as development actors will allow us to favour synergy between local communities in countries of origin (which elaborate local development projects), concerned local communities and migrant organisations from the relevant region. *Bilateral and multilateral cooperation should support those connections and synergies.*

### **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.[\[1\]](#)

## **2.7. Securing the trajectory of migrants through “Mobility centres” – multidimensional help in one hand – a dream?**

*Migration should predominantly happen as an informed option. Another option hence should be, not to migrate. A structure supporting that vision would be a mobility centre, where an individual's or family's migration project undergoes a reality check. Ideally there would be mobility centres along the migration routes, which provide information about the current situation, listening and care for the spiritual needs, possibility to file complaints of violations against their rights and also the exploration of alternatives for the chosen “migration project” and the option to get in touch with their family members for free. These counselling and protection structures should exist in the countries of origin, transit and destination, ensuring that risks for (potential) migrants, especially the vulnerable among them, are minimised and that they get access to their rights. In the countries of origin the counselling should also involve the development and/or provision of alternatives for a “risky” migration journey.*

### **3. Promote international mobility as an opportunity for the achievement of the MDGs, moreover as a basic freedom, as an element of human development.**

#### **3.1. Promote international mobility.**

Demetrios Papademetriou, President of the Migration Policy Centre, argues that the world is now in an “*age of mobility*”, rather than an age of migration, therefore he advocates for a new system of labour migration rather than a new migration system.

*Preventing forced migration needs to be matched with an active migration policy.* As international mobility of people can have a considerable positive impact on the development of countries, these countries all have interest in creating possibilities for their nationals to work abroad via legal channels. Good governance stands as a key condition for enabling the free decision to migrate.

Fair agreements between sending and receiving countries should be put in place regulating international workers’ mobility in order to ensure safe movement and the respect of international workers’ rights.

Freedom of circulation can be optimised through facilitated migration, which enables the migrant to fully exercise his/her role as a development actor. According to the OECD and the European Commission, organising circular migration could be part of the solution to the brain drain-brain gain dilemma, since it enables migrants to acquire new skills or to maintain their level of skills while providing the home country with their expertise.

#### **3.2. Brain drain – brain gain**

Granting that the right of movement is a fundamental principle, which cannot be put under discussion, the brain drain phenomenon is nevertheless hindering the development prospects of countries with high rates of emigration of skilled people.

Each year approximately 20,000 skilled workers, that is 1/3 of African intellectual potential, leave the African continent and head towards the northern countries. Moreover, currently, a shortage of health care workers has increased the EU tendency to have recourse to health migrant workers from developing countries. This state of fact leads to unbalanced repartition of healthcare workforce worldwide. Thus, Africa, which represents 11% of the world population, carries 24% of the world’s disease burden and only benefits from 3% of the world’s health workers. Moreover, one in four doctors trained in Africa are now working in OECD countries.

Developing countries, while investing in the training of health care workers, suffer from the recruitment made by developed countries, which save significant money in training costs. In order to avoid dramatic brain drain, hosting countries shall be made responsible for the way of recruiting workers from third countries.

*To cope with this situation, the principle of responsible and ethical recruitment should be one of the driving principles concerning migrant workers.*

In that sense, Caritas is supporting the initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO), which, in March 2008, in Kampala, presented the first draft of a Global Code for Ethical Recruitment. Caritas asks for a proper follow up to that initiative and hopes

that the World Health Assembly will respect its commitment to endorsing this Global Code of Practice for Ethical recruitment.

Receiving countries should take into account the impact head hunting has on health sectors in countries of departure. A significant increase (from 4% to 12%) of the public development aid dedicated to health measures is necessary, as has been demanded in France in *Secours Catholique, Médecins du Monde, Agir Ici (Oxfam) and Aide Médicale Internationale's campaign*. This would help to sustain health systems in Southern countries and prevent the erosion of health sectors due to mass emigration of skilled personnel.

Another measure could be to increase public development aid dedicated to strengthening national policies for reinforcing human resources (improvements in support of staff, wages, training and working conditions).

### **3.3. Impact of Remittances**

Monetary transfers by emigrants to their countries of origin form a close link between migration and development. Although there is no doubt that these remittances are an important source of foreign exchange, factors such as the varying forms of the transfers (family or collective), the channels of transmission (formal or informal), the costs of transmission and the ways the money is used (consumption, savings or investment) make it difficult to evaluate their actual and potential impact on the development of the recipient communities. Because of the informal nature of many transfers -an unknown proportion travel in the pockets of emigrants, relatives or friends- the central banks are unable to estimate their amount accurately.

Although far from the panacea they are sometimes purported to be, remittances, generally have a positive impact on key aspects of development, including human capital formation, investment, poverty reduction, and macro-economic stability and, in some cases, even on social and political change. They *constitute* a significant portion of household income and *an important social safety net for poor families*. Thus, with a multiplying effect in the whole community, remittances contribute to upgrading the standard of living of millions of households.

The current policy focus on leveraging remittance use for development and on strengthening the infrastructure supporting them will certainly enhance this potential. However, remittances, just like any other form of capital transfer, do not operate in a vacuum. A sound socioeconomic climate within migrant-sending countries, development-friendly migration policies within both sending and receiving countries, and extensive policy dialogue and coherence within and among governments are critical components that will make remittances work for development.

*One of the major challenges is to prevent these transfers from being considered an alternative to ODA.* If remittances can be in some cases (e.g.: Mexico) four times that of Official Development Aid (ODA), they cannot be considered as a substitute to the ODA. They are not a way to avoid the Monterrey commitment. Instead synergies between ODA and private remittances for fighting against poverty and for social justice should be encouraged.

*Consideration of migrants and their communities' viewpoints is crucial. One of the current major risks when state organisations or multilateral organisations debate on migration and development is to consider migrants simply as a 'labour force'*

*rather than human beings with lives, dreams and rights.* Many attempts to channel remittances towards development projects have failed due to insufficient participation. Another reason for failure is that they did not prioritise the choice of those concerned. After all, if migrants prefer to finance consumption goods or religious buildings these are respectable choices. Migrants' choices should be welcomed and trusted. The networks that migrants have created across countries of origin and destination should be used to encourage the use of remittances for the benefit of individuals, families, communities as well as economic and social development and the alleviation of poverty.

The role of NGOs in the current situation could be to monitor the mechanisms of transfer of remittances, and the costs of these remittances. A global action towards these institutions in order to lower the cost of the transfer could be a help for the migrants, lowering the cost of the migration (cost of the remittances).

#### **4. Migration and Development: a case for greater coherence of policies**

In order to enhance the development impact and alleviate poverty, policy coherence is crucial. Development objectives must be mainstreamed into migration policies, trade policies and agriculture policies. The international community would benefit from improving the integration of migration into development strategies. We must not forget that the key criteria for more coherence are the political impact on the improvement of the living conditions and the opportunities for people to make their own choice. A systematic and thorough impact assessment of external policies on developing countries, especially on the poor and vulnerable groups, including impact on forced migration is needed.

The influence of political choice is crucial, especially in the field of employment, trade and development policies. Those three aspects have to be put together to set up an effective policy which can give hope to people, and particularly young people. Development (turned to productive capacity increase), employment (particularly with regards to projects which are strongly labour-oriented and the development of high rate employment sectors), and trade (creating evolution and integration opportunities with regard to globalisation) together can become one coherent concept for just development.

*Development policies have to be oriented towards the reinforcement of people's choice capacity, especially of the poorest.* Their aim must be to develop people's opportunities. Migration enhances the choices people have. Migration is expanding freedoms that people enjoy. This widening of choices, of possibilities, of capabilities (to use A. Sen's vocabulary) is part of human development in itself, if one considers that development consists in the widening of freedoms. This reality of migration should not be seen in their income generating capacity but should be seen as an end in itself.

#### **Recommendations :**

- NGOs should actively try to influence the agenda of the debate (both academic and political) in the field of migration and development, and bring in it the concerns and interests of migrants themselves
- NGOs should push states to endorse the Global Code of Practice for Ethical recruitment
- Migrants should not be instrumental to any policy, including the achievement of the MDGs. A role of NGOs is to monitor the states and agencies to avoid this instrumental bias, both at methodological level (in the field of research) and at policy advice level.

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[1] <http://www.erso-project.eu/>