REPORT OF ACTIVITIES (at 30 October 2010)

Working Group on protecting and empowering migrants for development

The ad hoc Working Group on protecting and empowering migrants for development was established in 2009 by the current co-chairs, the Governments of the Philippines and the United Arab Emirates. Members of the WG include Argentina, Bangladesh, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ghana, Japan, Mexico, Spain and Thailand. The Group met several times on the margins of FOF meetings in 2010, and reported to the FOF meetings in February, April and July in Geneva.

The Working Group in 2010 identified two areas of principal interest for conducting further studies, linked to earlier and current GFMD objectives. Firstly, the promotion of partnerships to reduce the costs and risks of migration throughout the migration circle, and secondly partnerships to protect and empower migrants throughout the migration cycle, independent of the migrant's status.

The Working Group's workplan for 2010 in support of the Mexico Global Forum included three activities, that could support the 2010 themes and RT topics while implementing some key recommendations of earlier GFMD meetings. A brief update on these activities is given below:

1. ***Comparative study of s*ocial protection schemes for temporary migrant workers,** including end-of-service/social protection systems, as recommended by the 2009 Athens GFMD.

2. ***Testing low cost loans schemes for migrant workers,*** involving bank partners and, where possible, local NGOs, within the framework of the Abu-Dhabi dialogue partnership among Asian countries of origin and destination (following up on GFMD Brussels 2007 and Athens 2008).

3. ***Community project in Argentina to combat discrimination against migrants*** through training workshops (by INADI).

Two of the Roundtable topics of the Mexico GFMD 2010 relate directly to issues of migrant protection and empowerment: RT 1 õPartnerships for Migration and Developmentö and RT 2 on õHuman Mobility and Human Developmentö. The 3 above projects were intended to bring additional evidence on these themes, while following up on earlier GFMD outcomes.

Implementation of the Workplan

Study 1. Social Protection for Temporary Migrant Workers: Conceptual Framework, Country Inventory, Assessment and Guidance

The UAE commissioned Dr. Robert Holzmann, World Bank,[1] to undertake a comparative study of social protection schemes for temporary migrant workers across a number of host countries.

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[1] The study was undertaken by Robert Holzmann and Yann Pouget, World Bank and Marseille Center for Mediterranean Integration, Marseille, October 27, 2010

The objective was to identify good practices in social welfare schemes, including end-of-contract payments, and provide conceptual guidance on the design and composition of benefit packages to meet specific needs of various types of temporary foreign workers.

The study was completed over a period of 5-6 months in 2010 and included case studies across countries of origin and destination, Canada, New Zealand, Philippines and Barbados. It is the first study of this kind to approach social protection for temporary migrants against the background of a conceptual framework and a review of a concept- and template-based inventory of social protection provisions and other migration-related services in select major origin and destination countries.

The results of the study offer **a)** a conceptual framework to develop and assess social protection programs for temporary overseas workers (differentiating between 3 key types of õmigrantö workers); **b)** an inventory of such benefits offered by a number of OECD, Asian and GCC countries based on a special template; and **c)** an assessment of these benefits against the conceptual framework, presenting lessons learned from key case studies, and ideas on how to adjust end-of-service pay schemes to the needs of the temporary workers.

The outcomes include some p**roposed possible next steps,** including an extension of the study to other high- and a number of low-intensity migration receiving countries with and without special temporary migrant worker programs to increase the sample size and gain more confidence in the conclusions, or their need for adjustment.

The report points to the need for, inter alia, adequate financial instruments for retirement savings; regulation and supervision of the financial institutions; and safeguards for the investors/migrants.

The approach and conclusions need to be reviewed and discussed within and outside the migration and development community and substantiated by further investigation. This could be taken up by the WG in the future.

Study 2:   *Testing low cost loans schemes for migrant workers*

Following the report commissioned of Professor Philip Martin by the WG last year, rhe UAE launched a Yahoo Group discussion on testing a low-cost loan scheme to departing migrant workers within the framework of the Abu Dhabi dialogue partnerships among Asian countries of origin and destination (Bangladesh, Inida, Philippines and UAE). This will concretely test a concept that had resulted from the first GFMD in Brussels in 2007.

There have been some productive exchanges with the Philippine Central Bank on possible options for low cost migrant loans. The Bangladesh Government has also established a national bank for the purposes of offering affordable loans to its overseas contract workers.

The desired outcome of the Yahoo Group is: (1) to ensure participation of enough stakeholders to make it work (governments and banking organizations), and (2) to support Professor Martin in designing a scheme that could be trialled within the Abu Dhabi dialogue program based on what transpires in the Yahoo discussion.

These deliberations are valuable for the discussion of RT 2.1 in 2010, for deepening the Abu Dhabi dialogue program; and need to be followed through to some useful general conclusions by the Working Group in 2011.

Project 3: INADI[2] - Establishing a culture of equality - A community project for migrants

The objective of this project was to establish workshops that raise awareness, and teach about anti-discrimination and human rights among migrant and neighborhood organizations, in order to reduce migrantsø vulnerability and lack of access to rights and entitlements in Argentina. The overall, lober term goal is to promote a fully inclusive and democratic model of citizenship in Argentina.

The problem being addressed was that discrimination hampers social integration and cohesion among migrant and local communities based on equality and fairness. Discrimination against migrants has resulted in limited access to housing, education, health care, social security, etc and increased the vulnerability and poverty of many migrants. Lack of information for the migrants, and lack of awareness of the community, were major contributing factors being addressed by the project.

Key activities of the project included the joint development of criteria on how to discuss, communicate and teach the various forms of discrimination that can arise in day-to-day social interactions. Local migrant and neighbourhood organizations are key to understanding and redressing these.

A methodology employing motivational and learning-by-doing strategies was applied in workshops held with 48 organizations in the Bolivian, Paraguayan, Peruvian and Eastern European communities and with 8 neighborhoods in the city and province of Buenos Aires. There were some 10,000 direct beneficiaries, male and female of all ages, and 25,000 indirect beneficiaries of the workshops.

A major deliverable of the project is a guide of a model workshop for trainers. One of the enduring outcomes of the workshop has been the training of trainers from among the participants of the workshops.

The results of the study were intended also to serve the discussions of RT 1.2 on joint strategies to address irregular migration and the Common Space panel on perceptions about migrants in society.

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[2] National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (El Instituto Nacional contra la Discriminación, la Xenofobia y el Racismo (INADI).)