

RT 2: Human Mobility and Human Development

General Rapporteur's Report to Plenary (Mr Azzouz Samri, Morocco)

Roundtable 2 addressed the theme Human Mobility and Human Development. The discussions focused first on reducing the costs of migration and second on the gender dimensions of migration and its consequences for families – both building on earlier GFMD work and introducing new analytical perspectives.

The roundtable examined the human development dimensions of migration through two important perspectives. First, how to reduce the costs and maximize individual gains from migration. Second, that migration has implications for the human development of families, and important gender dimensions.

Session 2.1: Reducing the costs of migration and maximizing human development

Overarching themes

The first roundtable addressed three key issues:

- Reducing up-front expenses and other costs, which affect opportunities to migrate “regularly” and safely.
- How to best regulate private intermediaries.
- Access to and provision of social services to migrants in the country of destination and the provision of social services to migrants abroad by origin countries.

Key issues

Reducing the up-front costs of migration

- High up-front costs of migration can jeopardize the rest of the migration life cycle if they are not addressed by countries of origin and destination in cooperation with the private sector and other stakeholders. Lowering the costs of migration is a joint responsibility of origin and destination countries; national efforts alone are rarely sufficient.
- Many good practices for lowering costs originate from countries of origin (e.g., Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia). For instance, providing information to migrants; standard and low-cost fees; welfare funds; health coverage; subsidized loans; and establishing one-stop shops where migrants can obtain information, orientation and services:
 - Indonesia’s decentralization policies to bring these services closer to local communities can also reduce direct costs to migrants.
 - Bangladesh recently created an Expatriate Welfare Bank to provide collateral-free loans to migrants and loans to returnees.
 - A number of countries already offer low-cost loans, but these have not always succeeded. A new approach for temporary contract workers is being tested by the United Arab Emirates in the context of the Abu Dhabi Partnership program between the UAE and

several Asian countries of origin. The UK suggested monitoring and evaluation from the start of this program.

- Country of destination policies to reduce the costs of migration include the promotion of circular migration – both through managed programs and through a legislative framework that enables spontaneous circular migration (e.g., allowing dual citizenship and the possibility of residence abroad without jeopardizing long-term residence permits).

Regulation of intermediaries

- The regulation of intermediaries such as recruitment agencies can result in both lower costs and safer channels for migrants. For example, there are two basic ways to regulate private recruiters:
 - A national registry of agencies that are certified and licensed;
 - Government controls that are sufficiently balanced by incentives, including capping fees. The overreliance on controls can lead to irregular migration and the use of unregulated channels.
- Some of the most promising programs are government-to-government, or government-to-employer programs. But the private sector can be a constructive stakeholder, also to help check the validity of contracts.

Ensuring migrants have access to social benefits

- The most often cited reason for excluding migrants from access to health systems is costs; but studies on the usage of health services indicate that migrants make less use of such services in countries where they are available [compared with nationals].
- Regularization was suggested as one way to extend health coverage to migrants. But elsewhere, origin countries have taken their own initiatives. Mexico and Thailand for instance provide health services to migrants abroad.
- Collaboration and mutual recognition through multilateral or bilateral agreements are another way to extend social benefits to migrants – for instance, the Ibero-American Social Security Agreement, a multi-lateral arrangement that bears watching (and learning) by the GFMD.
- The WHO recommended a greater focus on providing preventive care and not only emergency care to all migrants, mitigating out-of-pocket expenses, and investing in linguistically-sensitive services and public health challenges in migrant-sending countries.

Session Outcomes

- The United Arab Emirates is organizing a workshop to examine issues around recruitment and to engage recruitment agencies in better preparing and protecting overseas contract workers.
- Develop, or implement existing, codes of conduct and registries for recruitment agencies.
- Explore and evaluate innovative approaches to providing low-cost loans for migrants.
- Promote cooperation mechanisms between origin and host countries for better job matching and skills recognition.
- Promote portability of pensions and other social rights; explore social security and end-of-contract payment arrangements for temporary labor migrants (e.g. based on the study commissioned by the Working Group on protecting and empowering migrants for development on this issue).
- Promote “one-stop-shops” in origin and host countries for information on migration and return (also circular migration), to minimize the “information asymmetry” for migrants.
- Assess cost effective healthcare models for various types of migration scenarios.

- Analyze and minimize the costs associated with managed and spontaneous forms of circular migration.

RT 2.2 Migration, gender and family

Discussions of migration have traditionally focused on the individual, but migration has broad consequences for families – and particularly women and children. The session focused on two particular sets of challenges.

- *First*, how to prevent family disintegration and empower families throughout the entire migration cycle.
- *Second*, how to integrate a gender perspective in migration and development policies to address the specific vulnerabilities of women and child migrants.

Overarching themes

- Family unity – regardless of where it takes place – is the ideal outcome for families separated by migration.
- In cases where family unification is not yet possible, complementary policies and transnational programs can ease the strains of separation, which can seriously compromise the potential development benefits of migration.
 - For example, the Philippines and Sri Lanka have partnered with Microsoft to train migrant workers and their families in how to use communications technology to maintain contact with each other across borders.
 - Israel has a program to work with Filipino care workers to strengthen their ties with families back home including training for Filipino diaspora organizations.
 - Transnational programs where countries collaborate to address key social service challenges (e.g., Italy-Moldova).
- Women and child migrants should be able to access basic social benefits – including health and education – on the same basis as nationals in the destination countries. Access to these benefits is a right enshrined in core international human rights instruments and the policies of a number of countries.
- However, women and children migrants may also require special protection, particularly when they are at risk of becoming the victims of criminal networks and trafficking. Domestic workers and workers on temporary contracts also require special protections.
- Mexico offered a good model for countries of origin with its integrated approach to protecting, supporting and reintegrating returned unaccompanied minors. This is possible through an interagency effort that enjoys high-level political commitment (including by the First Lady of Mexico). Partnerships with international public, private, and other civil society actors have strengthened the effectiveness of the program. The country is now exploring integrated data systems to improve the program.

Key issues

- Current migration data rarely take into account transnational households, and family and children left behind in the country of origin.
- Too often, transnational programs are dependent on finite project funding. Yet in order to have sustainable impact, there is a need for funding stability.

- In many instances, countries have good laws but implementation and execution remains incomplete due to a lack of appropriate policies and institutions. Similarly, the international legal framework exists, but all too often it still has to be translated into national laws, policies, and actions.
- Numerous intergovernmental agencies have identified good practices for addressing these challenges that can offer lessons for other countries. Not all countries or regions have institutional structures to carry out these programs and policies and can benefit from capacity building.

Session Outcomes*

- Even in societies where migration is not yet a widespread phenomenon, the movement of people is changing family structures. The GFMD can help by making available on its website best practices identified in its meetings, so that countries can learn from each other, and to inform policy responses to the new challenges.
- Member states should ratify all UN conventions that refer to the rights of the child, and then promote national implementation.

And finally,

- Migrant women should be incorporated into the agenda of the African Women's Decade, which was launched on October 24, 2010.

***ADDENDUM:** The Master of Ceremonies announced the following additional recommendations made in the RT 2.2 sessions [at the request of the RT Coordinator]:

- Consider establishing an ad hoc Working Group on gender within the GFMD.
- Develop some gender-sensitive [policy/program] guidelines with appropriate indicators.

11 November 2010