

### Third Thematic Meeting

***MIGRATION AS AN ENABLER FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT***  
-Enhancing migrant empowerment and voluntary social and economic assets transfers

**La Salle II, ILO Building, Geneva**  
**20 November 2013**

### Executive Summary

1. On 20 November the third thematic meeting during the Swedish Chairmanship in the GFMD took place in Geneva. The meeting with the title *Migration as an enabler for inclusive social development – Enhancing migrant empowerment and voluntary social and economic assets transfers*, was co-convened by the governments of El Salvador and Greece. The objective of the meeting was to focus on these key issues, identify good practices and especially to feed into the work of the GFMD Roundtables 3.1 (*Empowering migrants, their households and communities for improved protection of rights and social development outcomes*) and 3.2 (*Migrant asset transfers and their effect on health and education*). To link these two roundtables, the meeting was structured around the issues of health and education from both the perspective of empowerment of migrants, as individuals with rights to access information and services as well as how migration and migrants, as development actors, can impact positive outcomes in health and education through voluntary social and economic asset transfers. The meeting gathered some 150 participants from governments, international organisations and civil society.

2. The meeting was opened by a key note speaker followed by three panels and a concluding session. The key note speaker, **Mr Gibril Faal**, stressed the role of the diaspora in facilitating migrants' assets transfers especially in the health and education sectors. To start or maintain the virtuous circle of migration, empowerment and development, there is need to protect the fundamental rights of migrants and diasporas. He urged governments to adopt the relevant legal frameworks at the national and international levels and to facilitate, coordinate and/or undertake practical diaspora-related initiatives and actions. He offered them a 6-point roadmap: a) work with groups on thematic and sectorial issues; b) facilitate substantive and substantial migrant participation; c) accommodate plurality amongst migrants and diasporas; d) incorporate capacity-building in all forms of engagement; e) create bespoke migrant and diaspora support packages; and f) support the growth and expansion of diaspora programmes.

3. **Panel I on “Scene-Setting”** featured the country experiences of Greece and El Salvador in migration, health and education. **Mr Evangelos Syrigos** focused his intervention on the Greek New Code of Immigration and Integration and the National Integration Strategy which provides a number of rights to migrants, including the right to free movement and establishment all over the country, equal access to education, paid work or service provision, vocational training and professional orientation, social assistance and protection, citizenship, etc.

4. **Ms. Ada Abrego** discussed how El Salvador has appreciated the positive impact of migration on health and education. Comparative studies have shown better material conditions enjoyed by children of migrant parents than those of non-migrant parents, although research acknowledged the negative impact on their emotional conditions. She also mentioned that some studies also revealed that migrant transfers can lead to inequalities at the local level and have adverse effects on social cohesion. More studies are needed to better equip policymakers at harnessing migration's positive impact while minimizing its negative effects. Multilateral and bilateral cooperation, as well as a human rights-based approach in government interventions are likewise crucial.

5. Several delegates shared their own national programs and policies<sup>1</sup> in harnessing migrants' assets transfers for development, particularly in the health and education sectors. Other interveners emphasized the importance of keeping migrants' rights at the centre of the debate.

6. **Panel II on "Migration and Health"** was chaired by Mr. Syrigos and comprised of four panelists - **Ms. Mary Kezzah**, Assistant Commissioner for Labour, Ministry of Labour Kenya; **Mr. Chris Lewis**, Health Advisor, Department for International Development, United Kingdom; **Mr. Davide Mosca**, Director, Migration Health Department, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and **Ms. Sonia Plaza**, Senior Economist, the World Bank.

7. **Ms Mary Kezzah** shared the challenges for many migrants coming to Kenya in terms of access to health. Without the sufficient capacity to provide health care for migrants, collaboration and partnership with neighbouring countries and the international community is a must for the Kenyan Government. **Mr Lewis** highlighted a number of areas that would benefit from a stronger acknowledgement of the links between migration and health outcomes, namely, health systems strengthening, health partnerships, training opportunities, health professionals working and provision of health care in the UK. Appropriate policy interventions in these areas could create a triple win (for countries of origin, countries of destination and the individual migrants). **Mr. Mosca** articulated IOM's position that it is important to link the 'migration health' and 'migration and development' debates, with migrants' health and well-being at the centre. He reiterated IOM's policy recommendations to the HLD in this regard. **Ms. Sonia Plaza** revealed findings from the World Bank (WB) on the effect of remittances on household consumption and decision making, as well as on health care of families left behind. Interesting programs and practices on migration and health were shared by different delegations during the open discussion<sup>2</sup>. A few questions were also raised to the panelists, which ensured a lively and meaningful debate.

8. **Panel III on "Migration and Education"** was chaired by **Ms. Ada Abrego**, who was joined by three panelists -- **Mr. M Muhammad Ayub Chaudhry**, Joint Secretary (Emigration/Overseas Pakistanis), Pakistan, **Ms. Suzanne Sheldon**, Director, Office of International Migration, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, U.S. Department of State and **Ms. Alexandra Yuster**, Associate Director, Division of Strategy and Planning, UNICEF.

9. **Mr. Chaubry** explained that for Pakistani migrant workers, access to education varies according to the destination. In the Gulf where 95% of Pakistani workers are unskilled, children have limited access to education; hence, the Pakistani Government has established various educational and vocational institutions there. Back home, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan runs a system of certification and standardization that enables students from Pakistan to seek higher education in developed countries. **Ms. Sheldon** highlighted the US policy of giving free primary and secondary education to every child in the country regardless of his/her national origin or immigration status. The US federal government offers a number of programs to supplement states and local agencies' efforts in promoting assimilation of US immigrants, while other government agencies provide crucial information and resources for migrant students. **Ms Yuster** stressed that education is critical for the social inclusion of children in the context of migration, both in countries of origin and destination. She suggested a number of concrete initiatives in destination countries, such as equitable resource allocation to schools, language training for newly arrived immigrant children and their mothers, participation in early childhood education and care, and diversity training for school personnel and teachers.

10. During the discussion national experiences in migration and education were shared<sup>3</sup>. The open discussion highlighted the importance of building collaboration between origin and destination countries and working with the civil society in order to provide the necessary educational support for migrants. Teaching both the mother tongue and the language of destination country promotes migrants' social inclusion, but one key concern is how to reduce and share in the costs of providing such services.

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<sup>1</sup> See the attached Summary Report for a brief description. More details about these practices will be showcased on the GFMD Policy and Practices Database that is currently being developed by the GFMD Support Unit and will be launched in March 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

11. During the **concluding session**, **Ms Kathleen Newland** remarked that there was general consensus on health and education as the most powerful building blocks of human capital which, in turn, is the foundation of development. She offered some key messages for policymakers: a) Providing opportunities to migrants enables them to empower themselves and others. b) Both countries of origin and destination share in the responsibility to put the right policy structures in place in order to make the most of what migrants choose to do. c) Policymakers should take advantage of the recent explosion of research on migration and development to better understand migration and its inter-linkages with other public policy issues. d) Governments should continue to learn from each other's experiences, for example through the GFMD and its Platform for Partnerships. e) When migrants can exercise their rights and take advantage of opportunities, they share assets, create associations, volunteer to share their skills in their countries of origin, and provide innumerable examples of positive action.

12. **Amb. Åkerman Börje** concluded that the meeting generated a consensus about the importance of migration as a key component of social development. Focusing the discussion on specific sectors like migration and education was helpful to make visible the positive impacts of migration on development.

This Executive Summary was prepared by the GFMD Support Unit.