

GFMD 2011 Concluding Debate

1–2 December 2011, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Report of the Rapporteur : Cluster 1

Labour Mobility and Development

Thank you Mr. Chair. Before commencing I would like to thank Irena and Malin and their teams for the hard work they devoted to enable me to present the report on the three working sessions held under Cluster 1 titled Labour Mobility and Development. As I have 10 minutes to speak meaning 3 minutes to report on each session, I shall be very brief and to the point and shall not go into any detail.

Working Session 1.1:

The topic of Working session 1.1 was “Engaging the private sector in Labour Market planning.

☞ **Objective of the session was to discuss Strategies and practices** for improving dialogue and cooperation between government and private sector.

☞ **Overarching themes discussed are as following:**

1. Governments recognized a clear need to involve the private sector in planning the labour market demands including immigration needs. Knowing your national labour market is a precondition for effective policies on international labour mobility. This can be supported by both:
 - Public employment agencies that would maintain an overview of available jobs and job-seekers (database).

- Tripartite consultation mechanisms (committees, platforms) consisting of the employers, the trade unions and the government, to determine the demand for labour immigration and set yearly quotas and/or react directly to employers requests.
2. An employer demand-driven system is a new innovative approach to labour mobility, which remains to be assessed.
 3. The public and the private sector have incrementally different interests, time perspectives and obligations, wherein the government always ensure a long-term positive human and socio-economic development.
 4. Making labour migration a development choice rather than a necessity: while promoting and consolidating the development gains of migration, governments should also focus on creating quality job opportunities , including through the private sector, to ward off unintended consequences like brain-drain. In this context attention needs to be given on legal and administrative reform, as well as necessary infrastructure development. There are a number of best practices on effective public-private partnerships in this regard that may be replicated in comparable situations through farther assessments.
 5. There is a recognition about engaging the private sector in policy making regarding transition from informal to formal sector, skill training and up scaling as well as reintegration into the local labour market.

☞ The next sub topic was the role of governments to provide for incentives for companies to invest in the countries of origin. The following issues were discussed:

1. Companies wanting to invest in emerging markets, but finding that they cannot find the necessary skills, can be incentivised to invest in training of the local workforce (even beyond their needs) rather than bringing in migrant labour for example by the government providing part of the training costs.

2. Countries that in the current economic downturn find a large number of unemployed migrant workers can opt to cooperate with companies present in the COO in order to provide employment upon return.
3. migrant recruiting companies should be encouraged to invest and participate in community based programmes targeting.
4. Increased awareness of the diaspora as potential investors in their COO, with help of COD government grants or credits (risk capital).
5. The private sector has so far been rather cautious about their engagement with GFMD. There is a need for dialogue with them for them to have a better understanding about the objectives and the process of GFMD. It was suggested to raise the issue of private sector being included as a counterpart in international dialogue on migration and development, at the next GFMD.

Working session 1.2:

The topic of Working Session 1.2 under Cluster 1 was ‘Lowering the costs of Migration for higher development gains’.

1. It was felt during the discussions that there is a need to identify areas where costs are incurred in the migration cycle in order to address them.
2. It was also opined that there is a need to work on both sending and receiving ends, in order to lower migration costs.
3. Some areas identified by interlocutors as areas to address in order to minimize costs are:
 - i. Access to information : as mentioned by Nigeria ‘ignorance is expensive’. So, access to information on service terms, etc by the migrants before departure and after arrival is imperative for lowering the cost;
 - ii. Lack of contract transparency;

- iii. processing costs, which includes huge documentation, medical check-ups etc.;
 - iv. access to (low cost) loans ;
 - v. Illegal fees;
 - vi. Ineffective job-matching.
4. A wide discussion on circular migration took place during this working group session. Some countries mentioned that they have benefitted from the experience and bilateral arrangements in this regard. Whereas the other point of view from civil society was that circular migration does not always generate a win-win situation. It was felt that in circular migration, migrants cannot reach services that are available to other migrants. It was also pointed out that there was a need for further discussion on the term circular migration or seasonal or temporary migration.
 5. Various aspects of South-South migration were discussed that reflected both positive and negative lessons.
 6. Regularization was presented in different contexts (ECOWAS, Spain, South Africa, Zimbabwe, MERCOSUR) as a strategy or policy to lower the costs of migration.
 7. Number of interlocutors opined that if the housing, airfare etc. are provided by employers, it would lower cost of migration.
 8. The co-chairs recommended that the GFMD in future may discuss the issue of skill, qualifications development and training, as well as skills recognition, for purposes of empowering contract workers and increase their earning power in the country of destination and their re-integration potential when they return home. It was pointed out from the floor that skill development and training should be looked into in cooperation with the countries of origin. There is also a scope for on the job training.
 9. The co-chairs also recommended that the next GFMD move forward more concretely on monitoring and regulating recruitment agencies, to ensure accountability.

Working Session 1.3:

The topic of Working Session 1.3 was on ‘Global care workers at the interface of Migration and development.’

☞ There were three areas discussed during this session. The first sub topic was on Implications of the global care industry for development. Both the positive and negative implications were looked into. Following issues were raised:

1. It was generally agreed that the care-workers contribute positively to the socio-economic development of their families and countries;
2. Need for policy makers to be aware of the implications in order to advocate with politicians for more appropriate policy and programme responses;
3. Care drain in the countries of origin;
4. Strain on the infrastructure in the developing countries receiving large number of migrants, specially in irregular migrants situation. Both the impact and responses depend on the available resources of the countries.
5. The Session agreed to watch the results of the study of UN women in India on impacts.

☞ The 2nd sub topic was gender responsive social protection measures. The issues discussed were as following:

1. Regular migration is the best form of social protection, particularly if combined with low pre-departure costs, pre-departure information, regularization in COD and regulation of recruitment agencies;
2. Educating care workers in both COO and COD;
3. Educating employers in COD;

4. Establishing programmes in COO for welfare of families at home like family social welfare offices, counseling and adequate consular support for migrants abroad like welfare funds, female labour attaches, etc.;
5. Monitoring of working conditions through labour inspectors;
6. Strengthen or promulgate labour laws by including care workers under legal framework;
7. Re-integration measures;
8. Family re-unification;
9. Gender policies in both COO and COD;
10. Portability of social benefits; and
11. Incentives for employers.

☞ The 3rd topic discussed was types of data and tools needed for evidence-based policies and programmes.

1. There was a broad recognition that availability of data are critical for understanding impacts of domestic workers, but the present data available are highly inadequate;
2. There are models and methodologies available for collecting and sharing data but they are not being used;
3. The big challenge is exchange of information between institutions and governments and within government, specially for responses during crisis situation;
4. Check list to protect and support migrant domestic workers could be a useful aid for governments preparing or reviewing legislation in line with the ILO convention 189;
5. Set up an interactive space in the GFMD website to comment on the checklist ;

6. It was also agreed that the GFMD should follow-up on the implementation of the report “Migrants Count” promoted by GMG; and
7. Better linking data on labour market needs with recruitment practices;
8. However, it was also mentioned that there was a need to be cautious with regard to sharing data.

Thank you