



**Global Migration Group  
Practitioners Symposium**  
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## **BACKGROUND PAPER**

### **Mainstreaming migration into national development strategies**

Prepared by UNDP with contributions from the GMG<sup>1</sup>

#### ***Introduction***

##### **Why mainstream migration in development strategies?**

Human mobility is not just an age-old phenomenon; it is also a fundamental element of human freedoms. Mobility presents both risks and opportunities for those involved, including for migrants, their families, and communities at origin and destination. The 2009 Human Development Report (HDR) entitled “Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development” suggests that migration entails potential benefits for all those stakeholders, depending on the conditions under which movements occur. Indeed, the nature and extent of impacts will depend on who moves, how they fare abroad and their proclivity to stay connected. Whether, for example, migrant workers are provided decent working conditions, opportunities for skills development, and opportunities to work at a level commensurate with their skills will affect not only their integration, but also their contributions in terms of money, knowledge and ideas towards their communities of origin. Economic conditions and the institutional environment in countries of origin need to be conducive, if monetary and other transfers resulting from migration are to be converted into larger scale development gains. Also, while those at the bottom of the social ladder, the poor and low-skilled, have potentially the most to gain from migration, their access to migration opportunities tends to be most restricted. Not only do they lack the resources to move, they also often face policy and institutional barriers that limit their mobility both within and across countries.

In order to unlock the positive potential of both internal and international migration, the HDR recommends a core package of six policy measures aimed at: liberalizing and simplifying regular migration channels; ensuring basic rights for migrants; reducing transaction costs associated with movement; improving outcomes for migrants and destination communities; enabling benefits from internal mobility; and making migration an integral part of national development strategies.

This paper is focused on the last of these recommendations, as it is potentially encompassing of the others. Mainstreaming migration in national development strategies will help countries develop and pursue the kinds of policies that the HDR recommends. It will also allow taking existing programmes and initiatives further and deeper. Agencies of the GMG like IOM and UNDP have been implementing programmes to enhance the contribution of migration to development, such as IOM's Return of Qualified Nationals and Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) and UNDP's TOKTEN, for many years now, targeting in particular the contributions that diasporas can make by bringing back their knowledge and expertise. More recently, the inter-agency EC-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMIDI) has provided a motor for civil society and diaspora engagement in migration and development projects, and is now undertaking two mainstreaming exercises. Integrating

<sup>1</sup> This paper was prepared by Sarah Rosengaertner and Luisa Bernal, UNDP with contributions from ILO, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF and the JMIDI Programme Management Unit.

migration as an essential factor in national development plans will allow for its consideration across sectors, ministries, and regardless of whether the migration is in- or outbound.

## **Status Quo**

A review undertaken for the 2009 HDR of existing National Human Development Reports and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) finds that to date such national development reports and strategies have tended not to prioritize migration. Where PRSPs do address the issue, they often recognize the complexity of international migration, and acknowledge both its advantages and potential negative effects. However, they tend to lay out migration-related policy initiatives without explicitly basing them on prior analysis. This suggests that in many cases the state of knowledge about the relationship between the proposed initiative and its expected development impact is weak. National development plans could provide a useful tool for integrating migration and development issues, but this will require investments in data and analysis, and in broad stakeholder consultation. Indeed, while the 2009 HDR has provided a comprehensive analysis of the interlinkages between migration and human development at the global level, few countries have such a clear picture when it comes to their national situation.

## **Issues**

Already in 2005, the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) in its final report entitled “Migration in an interconnected world: new directions for action” posited that national migration governance is the cornerstone of regional and global governance in this field. Consequently, the GCIM recommended that migration should form an integral part of every country’s national economic and development plan.

Based on the observation that many countries are lacking clear objectives for their migration policies, the GCIM called for strengthening national migration governance by addressing four key challenges: 1) improving coherence in national policy-making on migration; 2) enhancing coordination among different parts of government and with other sectors of society; 3) building capacity for developing, implementing and evaluating migration policies; 4) fostering inter-state cooperation to tackle the transnational aspects of international migration, based on the principle of shared responsibility.

Using these four indicators, this paper will lay out some suggestions on how to address these challenges as part of a mainstreaming exercise, aimed at integrating migration in national instruments for development planning, such as PRSPs, Sector Wide Approaches (SWAP) and support instruments such the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

The paper recommends a three-pronged approach to the mainstreaming process drawn in large part from the Handbook on Mainstreaming Migration in National Development Planning, produced by IOM, UNDP, ILO and UNICEF, with input from several other GMG agencies:

### **Issue 1: Mainstreaming at the policy level**

*Challenge: Identifying policy objectives for migration and development and ensuring coherence among relevant policy areas and interventions*

Mainstreaming migration into national development strategies is first of all significant as a statement of political will for acknowledging and enhancing the relevance of mobility for the achievement of national (regional or local) policy goals. A national development plan that expressly states the government’s commitment to migration as an issue is also significant, as it provides a mandate for the development of sectoral policies from a migration perspective.

However, no one size fits all, and mainstreaming migration may not be relevant for all country contexts. Where, for example, levels of immigration and emigration are very low, remittances negligible and few nationals are living abroad, governments may decide to prioritize other issues. Countries that have a large diaspora; witness the emigration of skilled professionals affect critical sectors of their economy; and/or see a significant share of the population live on remittances receipts (but maybe not those who most need support) – to name but a few possibilities – may decide that it is relevant for them to consider migration as an issue in development planning. Having the necessary data and conducting a mapping of existing capacities on migration will be important for governments to be able to make an informed decision on this matter.

*Identifying policy objectives for migration and development*

Indeed, the mainstreaming of migration into development policies starts with a mapping exercise of what already exists in terms of: a) household and administrative data and research, b) policies and legislation, c) NGO projects and bilateral and international technical assistance related to migration. Initiatives can then be built on existing priorities and capacities, and on a reliable monitoring of demographic, social and economic trends, in order to ensure that they match needs and demands and are attuned to the dynamic character of migration.

The GMG Symposium will present and discuss a number of instruments and tools related to migration data collection, including the 2010 round of censuses, the report of the Commission on International Migration Data for Development Research and Policy “Migrants Count: Five Steps Towards Better Migration Data”, and the Migration Profiles. Guidance on data collection is available from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division, and the ILO. The Human Development Report Office is preparing guidance for the production of national human development reports focusing on migration, in follow-up to the 2009 global HDR. Further, a number of GMG agencies collect data and provide capacity building for data collection, including ILO, IOM, UNDESA, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, the five UN Regional Commissions and the World Bank.

In terms of the international legal framework that should govern national migration legislation, the 2008 GMG Handbook on Migration and Human Rights (available for download at: [www.globalmigrationgroup.org](http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org)) provides an overview of the relevant international legal terms and instruments, including the 1990 UN Migrant Workers Convention and the ILO conventions no. 97 and 143. The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration offers guidance for policy making, as does the forthcoming WHO global code of practice on the recruitment of international health personnel. IOM and UNITAR offer courses on international migration law, and the ILO International Training Center in Turin provides general training courses on international labour migration as well as courses addressing specific issues such as extending social protection to migrant workers and their families; fostering the social and professional reintegration of return migrants; and promoting integration and managing diversity.

A conceptual framework can facilitate thinking about the challenges and opportunities of migration in terms of human development. International migration can be seen as involving three basic kinds of transfers (inward or outward), each of which interplay with the sector in focus in different ways.

- The first is the **transfer of persons and workforce (T1)**, which modifies the size of the population and the workforce, as well as its composition
- The second is the **transfer of know-how and knowledge (T2)**: People, as they move, take with them ideas and knowledge and acquire new skills and ideas while abroad. This “knowledge capital” can circulate between the home and host countries of migrants through transnational social networks that facilitate the transfer of technology and entrepreneurship. Knowledge transfer can also occur when migrants return home.
- The third is the **transfer of financial assets (T3)**, which may take various forms: salaries, savings and remittances, as well as investment (including from members of the diaspora).

Using this kind of analytical lens does not mean that all three kinds of transfers are equally relevant in all countries. Each country’s situation is different in terms of its economic, social, political and cultural conditions, which will affect the interplay between migration – and the transfers it involves – and development. Not all countries will benefit from migration in the same way and policy options will need to be context specific.

The transfer of funds in the form of remittances, for example, may yield different human development outcomes in one country (or region) than the other, depending on local factors that can include gender relations, literacy rates, access to financial institutions, availability of public services such as health and education etc. Countries will need to identify the combination of factors and causal relations that make migration contribute rather than undermine human development.

Using a human development framework to assess the positive and negative impacts of migration-specific interventions allows countries to look beyond the purely economic implications of mobility to include social and health factors as well as questions of equity and empowerment. The human development lens also gives particular attention to vulnerable groups who move or stay behind, such as the poor, elderly, women and children. Governments need to ask how those groups will be affected by a proposed policy measure.

In the framework of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD process), an Informal Inquiry on Policy and Institutional Coherence, Data and Research that surveyed governments ahead of the GFMD in Athens in 2009 found that a

majority of responding governments had developed new policies and programmes that reflect a coherent approach to migration and development. A larger majority has pursued and refined existing policies and programmes. The kinds of interventions that countries have developed include: setting up a database to better match prospective emigrants with jobs abroad; developing an education and training plan to prepare workers for the global labour market; support children left behind by migrant parents through social services; provide return and reintegration assistance for migrants; strengthen ties with and services for communities abroad, e.g. through consular outreach; enter into bilateral agreements on temporary or circular labour migration and fostering cooperation between banks in countries of origin and destination to reduce the costs of sending remittances.

### *Ensuring policy coherence among sectors*

The objective of mainstreaming migration in sectoral approaches is that sectors are able to adapt their strategies to the realities of migration. Ministries and agencies understand and are able to demonstrate how migration impacts on their sector's objectives and potentially its performance; and how the sector's work might promote the benefits or reduce the negative impacts of migration. Ministries and agencies may ask themselves the following questions in order to determine an appropriate approach to mainstreaming migration: How might migration undermine or promote the targets set out for the sector? How might the policies and programmes undertaken in this sector contribute to promoting or hindering migration?

Some countries have already integrated migration as a concern in their national development plans. The 2009 HDR review of PRSPs suggests that among those, control-focused approaches towards migration tend to dominate. These include: Combat trafficking (19); Modernize customs (18); Strengthen border control (17) Combat irregular migration (12); Promote refugee return (10); Tackle the 'brain drain' (9) etc. On the other hand, countries are increasingly looking at what the HDR calls proactive or facilitative approaches, such as: Engaging diasporas (17); Exporting labour (10); Facilitating remittances (9); Signing bilateral agreements (9); and so on. (HDR 2009, p. 83)

The challenge for countries that already address migration in their national development plans is to bridge their objectives and approaches in "traditional" development sectors with those adopted with regard to migration. For example, interventions on poverty reduction, social protection, and employment creation can offer synergies with efforts to combat human trafficking, as they address some of the factors that render people vulnerable to trafficking in the first place. Efforts to engage diasporas can have positive effects for sectors such as health, education and infrastructure, if the contributions of the diaspora in terms of money and skills are deliberately channeled into those areas and matched by domestic investments. It may thus make sense to explore systematically the interlinkages between all areas tackled in a PRS – those that are migration-related and those that are not - and to identify potential overlaps and opportunities for collaboration.

The conclusion of such an assessment will not always be to create additional activities. Modifying and in some cases revising existing policies and programmes may be more appropriate. Also, encouraging the involvement of migrants in countries of origin and destination does not necessarily mean that policies must target migrants exclusively. Rather, policies and programmes should follow an inclusive approach and should, to the extent possible, open up opportunities for all members of society, including migrants.

Governments and their partners need to ensure that the objectives of migration policy initiatives are understood and accepted, not only by governmental authorities, social and private partners, and NGOs, but also by citizens. A comprehensive approach to migration, driven by political commitment, needs to be understood and supported by public opinion.

### **Issue 2: Mainstreaming at the institutional level**

*Challenge: Ensuring coordination and cooperation between different ministries responsible for migration and development issues (whole-of-government approach), and between different levels of governance (local, sub-national, national); and institutionalizing regular consultations between government agencies and non-governmental stakeholders including the private sector and a wide range of civil society organizations.*

For a mainstreaming initiative to be successful and sustainable, it needs to enjoy broad national ownership and should involve government, civil society, donors/development partners, workers' and employers' organizations, parliamentarians, academics, migrants and diaspora associations, private sector etc. throughout the process – from assessment to implementation and

monitoring. Mainstreaming at the institutional level also starts with a mapping exercise that serves to identify institutional entry points and to get an overview of existing structures and capacities on migration.

#### *Fostering a whole-of-government approach*

Where the governance of migration is divided between ministries, mechanisms for coordination need to be established and maintained. Coordination is required not only between the different ministries that have a migration competence, but also between migration-related and other ministries. Where governments are participating in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) process, the national Focal Point for the GFMD can be a catalyst for intra-governmental consultations and coordination. The above mentioned Informal Inquiry on Policy and Institutional Coherence, Data and Research that surveyed governments ahead of the Athens GFMD in 2009 found that, moreover, a large majority of the responding governments has assigned responsibility for facilitating and coordinating the planning and work on migration and development to a particular government unit or department. Some have created a dedicated inter-departmental mechanism for coordination on migration and development, such as a commission or working group. Ministries and departments most frequently mentioned as being involved in the coordination of migration and development policies include foreign affairs, interior, migration/integration, labour and employment, social affairs, planning and population, trade and commerce.

Given the importance of policy-relevant research and data to formulate coherent policies on migration and development, close collaboration is also required with national and local statistical institutions (as well as non-governmental research centers and universities), as they possess key data and information to understand relevant trends and underpin a mainstreaming effort. Further, key service delivery sectors, such as for infrastructure, housing, health and education should have a clear understanding and be able to demonstrate how and why migration is an issue for them. Involving the social partners will yield policies that are grounded in social realities.

#### *Promoting multi-level migration governance for human development*

Identifying strategic partnerships at different levels of governance, including with local authorities, possibly provincial or state governments and with neighbouring or other partner countries in a sub-regional or regional context is important to address the complex nature of migration, which spans all these levels of governance. The drivers and impacts of migration are often most strongly felt at the local level, be it in terms of effects on the local labour market, the size and demographic composition of the local population, or the need for public service provision. In some cases, provincial or state governments may have jurisdiction on a number of migration-related policies, making consultations and agreement with sub-national levels of government inevitable. Communities or regions may also have strong ties with diaspora communities who originate from their area and can be an important player in developing national policies towards the diaspora. Where local authorities are at the frontline of providing services to migrants and their families - especially in the context of rural to urban migration – national governments should ensure that revenues are being shared so as to enable local authorities to cope with that task.

There are a number of established mechanisms for regional level cooperation that offer platforms for developing a joint approach to migration and development at the sub-regional or regional level. The European Union has made migration and development part of its Global Approach to Migration, and the African Union has developed a joint Migration Policy Framework for Africa. Regional economic communities, as well as Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs) can also serve to articulate joint interests and approaches to migration and development. Although informal in character, a recent evaluation of fourteen RCPs around the world suggests that they can effectively support countries' efforts to develop national and regional migration governance by (i) building trust between states and increasing understanding of migration issues, (ii) breaking down divides between states and between different government departments within states, creating networks and facilitating a harmonization of positions across regions and (iii) building capacity and effecting changes in concrete laws, policies or practices governing how migration is managed at the national and regional level.

#### *Designing a participative, multi-stakeholder approach to migration and development*

Mapping and tying in with existing institutions, structures and practices – both within the country and among migrants and diaspora communities abroad – is a critical factor for efficient and sustainable participation, as well as for strengthening these structures. Building trust should be a core policy objective when engaging with non-governmental stakeholders, especially diaspora organizations and networks who can be important contributors to home country development, but may be resentful if only conceived as a source of financial resources. Successful joint government-diaspora initiatives, such as the *Tres por uno*

programme in Mexico<sup>2</sup>, are usually the result of years of continuous, open engagement. The good practices identified by the EC-UN JMDI also show the importance of inclusiveness: successful government interventions targeting diasporas have engaged them throughout the process, including the joint design, implementation and evaluation of policy interventions.

Working closely with local research institutions and NGO/CSO networks, is instrumental for identifying and reaching vulnerable groups and creating ownership and visibility of policy processes. The mainstreaming process should be accompanied by support for the establishment of a structured local research infrastructure, or the inclusion of migration issues as a focus area of existing research structures, with specific regard to the regular monitoring and analysis of labour market trends, and socio-economic trends impacted by migration flows.

Migrants and their families can provide valuable information and feedback on how policies at a national and local level affect them at a household level. Enlisting the collaboration of migrant and diaspora networks can also provide valuable data for future programs and interventions. In light of the importance of having reliable counterparts representing civil society groups and to avoid biased interventions that favour particular groups, national and local governments may want to develop a set of indicators that can guide them in the identification of legitimate and representative migrant and diaspora associations.

Especially when it comes to labour migration, the private sector and trade unions, in collaboration with governments, are important actors to enforce legal standards and secure the protection of migrant workers, ensure decent working conditions and provide training for migrants. The private sector can be also an important player create investment and reintegration opportunities for returnees. Also, banks and other financial institutions are important partners when it comes to facilitating remittances flows and providing recipient households with access to financial services.

The aim of a mainstreaming exercise is to ensure that participatory and consultative structures set up during the initial process are sufficiently institutionalized so as to guarantee that consultation and collaboration among ministries and government agencies and with local and non-governmental stakeholders becomes part of daily practice, rather than remaining a one-off event. Ideally, structures for coordination and partnerships will be the subject of continuous adjustment and development, with all partners involved assuming responsibility for constantly evaluating and improving their efforts.

### **Issue 3: Mainstreaming in development partnerships**

#### *Challenge: Enhancing international cooperation on migration and securing support for capacity development*

The identification of migration as a government priority that enjoys high-level political support is an important step towards the alignment of international development assistance with migration-related goals and priorities. Integrating migration in development strategies can facilitate introducing migration in the dialogue with development partners, and securing funding and technical assistance for migration-related activities. Development partners can also be pro-active in supporting the integration of migration and development concerns in their assistance frameworks.

#### *Enhancing international cooperation on migration*

There are limits to what a country can achieve unilaterally when it comes to the transnational phenomenon that is international migration. As the 2009 HDR demonstrates, countries have much to gain from facilitating and better planning for internal migration. However, if migration flows are cross-border, involving more than one country, bilateral, regional and/or global cooperation will be needed to address issues such as protection of migrants, skills recognition, and transfer of funds to name but a few.

As a basis for such collaboration, all states involved need to establish coherent national migration policies. Ideally, these will be based on agreed national objectives, take account of related policy issues and be consistent with international law, including human rights law. Development partners can work to ensure in their own assistance frameworks a better appreciation of the close linkages that exist between international migration, development and other key policy issues, including trade, aid, human security and human rights.

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<sup>2</sup> *Tres por uno* is a government-supported investment scheme that provides matching funds from the national, state and local governments for each dollar that Mexican diaspora and hometown associations invest in their communities of origin.

International cooperation can also be a means of capacity-building, e.g. by enhancing exposure to the experience of others, through study visits and initiatives such as twinning projects between local authorities, that allow governments to gain greater insight into the experience and the methodologies developed elsewhere.

### *Securing support for capacity development*

Based on a capacity assessment (similar to, and best conducted as part of the initial mapping exercise) capacity development efforts should be targeted towards key institutions and stakeholders throughout the mainstreaming process, and, ideally, integrated into the work processes which they are intended to support (e.g. data collection and research; project or policy development or implementation, and evaluation). The capacity development of statistical offices and other research and data providers will often need to be prioritized to ensure data collection through established and sustainable mechanisms. GMG member agencies offer different kinds of support for capacity-development, as mentioned earlier in this paper. Governments and agencies will need to work together to tailor and align those efforts with national mainstreaming processes.

Participating in existing networks can be a first step towards enhancing domestic capacities by linking local experts, practitioners and policy makers with expertise and experiences from around the world. The EC-UN JMDI migration for development, or M4D, community of practice ([migration4development.org](http://migration4development.org)) provides such an opportunity for networking, as it brings together over 1,500 practitioners world-wide, including from diaspora organizations, migrant associations, development NGOs and civil society groups, academia, local authorities, UN agencies, bilateral aid agencies, private sector and governments. By involving them in e-discussions, the network allows all actors to contribute their expertise and know-how to on-going policy debates in the field of migration and development; to share their practices; and to ask other members for support in refining their own approaches.

Participation in regional and global fora such as Regional Consultative Processes, the Ad Hoc Working Groups of the GFMD and the proposed web-based and face-to-face Platform for Partnerships at the forthcoming GFMD IV in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, also provide important opportunities not only for knowledge-sharing and networking, but also for the establishing partnerships and securing technical assistance for capacity-development activities.

In its 2005 report, the GCIM argued that “it is in the shared interest of the international community to support those countries that need to strengthen their capacity in the area of migration policy, whether through the provision of technical and financial resources, the sharing of appropriate expertise or the establishment of training initiatives.” Many of the capacity needs identified by the GCIM resonate with the policy recommendations coming out of the 2009 HDR. All countries are thus encouraged to develop the necessary capacities to:

- Define the objectives of their national migration policy;
- Establish a functioning, effective and equitable legal system in relation to migration;
- Create a well-trained, informed and honest cadre of migration officials, including civil servants, police officers, border guards and refugee status determination officers;
- Develop an infrastructure that provides social, educational and legal assistance to migrants, and that helps the host society adapt to the presence of migrants;
- Ensure that resident foreign nationals are effectively represented by migrant associations and organizations, and
- Build up a capacity for data collection and analysis, research, monitoring and evaluation.

As is further developed in IOM's forthcoming World Migration Report 2010, “The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change”, core capacities for managing migration are required in developing and developed countries - in countries of origin, transit and destination - to enhance the positive effects of migration and minimize negative impacts. Conducting a mainstreaming exercise will ideally be a first step in building these needed capacities.

### ***Recommendations/scenarios for joint action***

- Identify national and regional opportunities to assist governments and institutions interested in mainstreaming migration in their national development plans to do so;

- Identify who is going to do what and when in terms of supporting policy formulation, implementation and evaluation through capacity development;
- Assist the development of the necessary data and evidentiary base to underpin a mainstreaming analysis and effort;
- Facilitate the creation of multi-stakeholder consultation mechanisms, including both governments and relevant non-governmental actors in country, to create a whole of government (and indeed whole of society) support network for mainstreaming.

### **Key questions for discussion**

- When is it relevant for a country to mainstream migration into its development strategy? What the incentives that governments have for doing so? Why should they be more proactive than capturing remittances for their macroeconomic benefits?
- What are the critical elements leading to successful whole of government approach to migration at the country level?
- How to identify capacity gaps for mainstreaming? Who are the key actors that need to be mobilized?
- How can GMG agencies work together at the country level most effectively to support a government's mainstreaming process?
- What tools and mechanisms -- such as the migration profiles to assist with data analysis and the Handbook on mainstreaming migration in national development planning - could be used to support government efforts and maximize synergies between and among GMG agencies to this end?

### **Sources:**

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For further information: [www.globalmigrationgroup.org](http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org)

#### **About the GMG**

The GMG is an inter-agency coordination group, established by the United Nations Secretary-General in early 2006. It brings together the Heads of agency and technical level experts of 14 UN organizations, the IOM and the World Bank and aims to enhance the overall effectiveness and coherence of the normative and operational response of its members and member states to the opportunities and challenges presented by international migration. The GMG has produced a number of joint outputs, including compilations and guidance material, and its members regularly work together in different constellations to provide countries with operational support. Apart from sustaining inter-agency cooperation in the field of international migration, the GMG and its members regularly contribute to the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), the United Nations periodical deliberations on international migration and development, and to regional cooperation processes and fora.